

An Original

35¢
BB
180

JAMES DEAN

A Biography
By
WILLIAM BAST

The brilliant young
actor's art and life—told
by the man who knew
him best.

BALLANTINE BOOKS



This book is designed specifically to be a personal description of James Bean as I knew him. It is told through my eyes, with much of the prejudice, naivete, immaturity and lack of objectivity that was a part of me during our years of friendship. Its intent is to bring him to you as I saw him. It is in no way intended to be, or include, a discussion of what has happened since his death. That is another book entirely.

William Bast

To all those who are dedicated

JAMES DEAN, a year after his tragic death, has become a twentieth-century legend. The outlines of his brief life are simple: born in a little town in Indiana; raised by his aunt and uncle on a farm after his mother's death of cancer when he was nine years old; went to school in California; studied to be an actor; won wide recognition in a handful of theatrical productions; became an idol to a generation of young people; died in an automobile crash at the age of twenty-four.

What sort of young man was he? What was he searching for, and what were the compulsions that spurred his meteoric career? What were the springs of his greatness as an actor, and what was the sorrow, the loneliness that dominated his life?

Here, in an intimate remembrance by one of his closest friends, is an unforgettable portrait of youth in turmoil.

A BIOGRAPHY

Cover photograph by Roy Schatt

JAMES DEAN

BY WILLIAM BAST

BALLANTINE BOOKS • NEW YORK

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Catalog Card No, 56-12808

BALLANTINE BOOKS, INC.

• New York 3, N.Y.

I

“ . . . yet a spectator merely, and perhaps a little too much occupied with the comeliness of the benches of the sanctuary to notice that it is the sanctuary of sorrow that he is gazing at.”

Oscar Wilde—*De Profundis*

In the darkness of Royce Hall Auditorium I slipped deeper into my seat and braced myself for more garbled Shakespeare. The unimpressive figure wearing a kilt stepped forward on the badly lighted rehearsal stage. I froze in anticipation. He spoke.

“We shall not spend a large expinse of time befer we reckon with yer several loves, and make us evin with you....

“We will perform in misure, time, and place. So thanks to all at once and to each one, whom we invite to see us crown’d at Scone.”

Like an agonizing dental extraction, it was over, but the pain lingered. I turned to an anonymous Theater Arts student seated next to me and asked, “Who is *that*?”

I would have preferred to know how whoever-it-was got cast in this production of *Macbeth*, but around campus a question like that smacked too much of envy.

“Dunno,” came the answer.

The slouched young man with the bad diction on stage was obviously going to remain an enigma. Then, out of the blackness from a distant corner of the empty auditorium, a name was dropped.

“James Dean,” came the harsh whisper out of the void, followed by an appreciative snicker from another direction.

“James Dean,” I remarked to myself. “A name to forget.”

Unconcerned with the scenery and lighting changes that were taking place on stage, I stood up, stretched, and, catching the light from the stage on the face of my watch, noticed it was close to one in the morning. Time for more coffee.

Downstairs in the Green Room, the large anteroom separating the men's and women's dressing rooms, I drew myself a cup of coffee from the steaming potful thoughtfully provided by the U.C.L.A. Theater Arts Department honor society.

After many hours of rehearsal, the dressing rooms were still a muffled buzz of activity. Wardrobe people were making alterations on problem costumes; make-up people were still trying to define characters with the help of Max Factor preparations; actors were going over their lines methodically, or sipping the hot black brew and discussing the "sad state of the Theater," or trying to study for tomorrow's exams through bloodshot eyeballs; and a fortunate few had found secure little niches where they were dozing off exhaustion.

This was the first run-through with costumes and, as was usually the case, it was progressing slowly. Typical of the several Theater Arts productions on which I had worked since entering U.C.L.A., *Macbeth* was being beautifully, if not lavishly, staged. The precision scene changes and intricate lighting systems caused many boring delays for the resetting of lights and readjustment of scenery. But the interruptions were well worth the tedium, because the end results were usually highly impressive.

U.C.L.A. productions seemed comparable to anything on the professional stages of Broadway. Each production was systematically planned and designed to utilize the fine technical abilities of the departmental heads. Most of the scenery, props, and costumes were manufactured on campus by the students, and whatever was impractical to

make on campus was borrowed from the various motion picture studios around town. The school's ability to buy materials at wholesale prices, the contributions of the movie studios, and the absence of expensive unionized stagehands made it possible for the department to present its productions at least as handsomely as Broadway, and at a much lower cost. Educational theater did have its advantages.

But the one commodity U.C.L.A. could not buy or borrow was talent, and of that they had little. Out of the three or four hundred students enrolled in the department, there were seldom more than five or six who could be called truly talented. They, fortunate souls, were being used constantly in one production after another, while the rest of us, the lesser talents desperately sought the few choice bit parts that were left. Competition ran heavy on campus at audition time.

There was another factor that made life difficult for the younger, lesser talents of the department. World War II had ended a few years before and, like most of the universities in this country, U.C.L.A. was overcrowded because thousands of returning servicemen were resuming or commencing their studies under the G.I. Bill of Rights. Many older, more matured, more worldly ex-servicemen had enrolled in the Theater Arts Department. It was natural for the directors and heads of the department to want to utilize their maturity, a rare quantity on any college campus, by casting them in the more maturity-demanding lead roles. It was a situation that often gave birth to some strong sentiments on the subjects of discrimination and type-casting. To counteract the resentment, the department proffered us a maxim: There are no small parts; there are only small actors. It rarely served as sufficient balm for the many wounded egos.

I finished my coffee and was about to have more, when Jeanetta Lewis, a svelte, Texas-bred lass who was working

wardrobe, dragged me into a dressing room to meet someone special to her. Since Jeanetta and I had met only a few weeks before and were still just casual friends, I figured this guy, whoever he was, must be pretty important to bring out in her such an obvious display of enthusiasm. I followed her lead, and, in the confusion of a dressing room, was presented to the backside of a costumed actor who was adjusting the troublesome sporran that hung down in front of his kilt.

"Bill," Jeanetta beamed, "this is Jimmy Dean."

The actor turned his head slightly, glanced over the upper rim of his glasses, and grunted an uninterested hello. It was my enigmatic friend with the crazy diction. He turned back to his preoccupation. I muttered a "glad to meetcha," but there was no response. Jeanetta and I stood there for a full minute, egg dripping from our faces.

"Jimmy's a Sigma Nu," she announced as she led me back into the Green Room.

I had learned Jeanetta was a sorority girl. Fraternity and sorority people were an uncommon species in the Theater Arts Department.

"Oh," I commented, pouring another cup of coffee for myself and one for Jeanetta, who was trying to unload a handful of left-over enthusiasm.

It was no new experience for me to have someone turn an uninterested back. Impressionable, young, and eager, I had come to U.C.L.A. from the University of Wisconsin. For the first time in my life, I found myself in a place where nothing and no one was familiar to me. I wanted friends badly. I needed them. Almost anyone would do. But for some unknown reason they were hard to come by in this strange new place. Each time I encountered a new face I tried as best I could to cultivate a friend, but to little avail. People seemed either too aloof or too self-interested to want to establish the binding ties of friendship. For a while I figured

I was pushing too hard, so I tried playing it passive. Then I got the idea that it was some personality affliction of mine that was keeping people away, so I went through a series of personality adjustments. But after several months of fruitless efforts, I abandoned the struggle and learned to accept their brand of friendship as a substitute for the real thing.

I had established one tie, however. Her name was Joanne. We had met in an acting class where we had been assigned a scene to prepare for an exam. During the course of our rehearsals, we started dating, and by the time the exam was over we were enjoying a convenient pre-engagement status called “going steady.” My friendship with Joanne was beginning to make life at U.C.L.A. a good deal more pleasant for me.

Joanne had been cast as Lady Macduff in the current production of *Macbeth*. As a nightly ritual, I would call for her at her home near the campus and drive her to the theater in the car her family had provided for her use.

“The reviews in *Spotlight* were terrible,” complained Joanne as we drove through a straight-up-and-down California rainstorm a few days after *Macbeth* had opened.

The reviewer in the Theater Arts Department’s own newspaper had been severely critical of the production and hadn’t even mentioned the fact that Joanne was in the play.

“I don’t think it was fair,” she continued. “I mean, they picked on just about everything. Poor Jimmy. Did you see what they said about Jimmy Dean?”

“Who?” I had forgotten.

“Jimmy Dean. You know, Jeanetta’s friend. The one who plays Malcolm.”

I remembered.

“Poor Jimmy,” she whined too sympathetically. “It said, ‘Malcolm (James Dean) failed to show any growth, and would have made a hollow king.’ That must’ve hurt.”

“Well, he wasn’t very good,” I reminded her.

"Poor Jimmy," she repeated.

I swung the car onto the road leading to the campus and squinted to make out through the liquid windshield the undulating forms that rushed toward us out of the early evening December darkness.

"Some guy was standing around the Green Room last night, blabbing how people like Jimmy should give up the theater," Joanne persisted. "He kept shouting, 'Doom! Doom to the notalents! They're doomed to a life of frustration. Year after year of beating their untalented heads against the impenetrable walls of the discriminating Theater.' Honestly, he was making me sick. I'm sure Jimmy overheard him. Poor Jimmy."

I pulled to a jerky stop in the parking lot behind Royce Hall Auditorium, got out, and slammed the car door.

"What's the matter with you?" Joanne said, running through the downpour toward the building.

As I let her pass through the stage door ahead of me, I thought I heard myself mutter, "Poor Jimmy!"

James Dean had gone comparatively unnoticed at U.C.L.A. The unobtrusive young man with the unruly sand-colored hair quietly roamed the campus, apparently minding his own business and only occasionally projecting himself beyond the shell rims of his thick-lensed glasses. He appeared to be nothing more than a simple, withdrawn little boy, not too long off the farm. He had transferred to U.C.L.A. from Santa Monica City College, where he had studied during his freshman year. When he entered U.C.L.A., he picked pre-Law as his major and Theater Arts as his minor, but gradually began devoting more and more of his attention to Theater Arts. Unfortunately, his soft-spoken, slightly introverted manner was completely drowned in the din made by the extroverts of the Theater Arts Department.

Generally, his background could have been considered comparatively normal, if not somewhat conventional, with

only one unusual disturbing note in his formative years. Until his ninth year, he lived a contented life with his loving and attentive mother, Mildred, and his gentle, soft-spoken father, Winton.

But only a short time after Winton Dean transplanted his little family from Fairmount, Indiana, to Santa Monica, California, Mildred developed cancer and died. Unsure and lost, Winton deemed it wiser to send the boy back to the farm in Indiana, where he could grow up under the guidance and supervision of Ortense and Marcus Winslow, Winton's sister and brother-in-law. So, with his grandmother, little Jimmy accompanied his mother's body back to Indiana, where she was laid to rest in a peaceful cemetery in Marion. Once in Fairmount, he was accepted into the Winslow household and began the normal process of growing up, going to school, and becoming a young man. The only major problem during the nine years he spent with his aunt and uncle seemed to be one of adjusting to the loss of his mother, a tragedy he considered a cruel injustice to him, personally. Upon his graduation from high school, he left Fairmount to join his father and stepmother, whom he had seen seldom during the preceding years, and began his college education in Santa Monica.

Although he was financially ill-equipped for the extravagance of college and fraternity life, his desire to belong was so strong that he decided to shoulder the burden of both. Through the help of the campus employment bureau, he had been able to put his knowledge of motion picture projectors to use by acting as projectionist for classes using visual education. With the money he earned from his part-time job, he paid for his tuition and books and joined a fraternity. The cost of "living in" at the Sigma Nu house near campus and the cost of going to school were keeping him broke, but he seemed to have no complaints.

"You know, you and I would make a good team," he suggested to me as we sat in the rear of a bus headed back from Hollywood to Westwood Village one night a month or so after we first met.

In the flat glare of the bus lights I could see his intense blue eyes, peering out at me from behind his thick lenses, magnifying the sincerity of their expression.

In the moment before I answered him, I thought how odd it was that this guy, whom I hadn't intended to cultivate as a friend, had slowly become an integral part of my life in just a few weeks. I reasoned that it was purely a matter of circumstance. We had been thrust together a good deal because of our girls, Joanne and Jeanetta, who were close friends and had taken to the idea of double dating, one of America's most unfortunate social customs, a procedure I had always considered to be a subtle manifestation of our society's psychological maladjustment.

It was true that we had, in a short time, been through several unusual experiences which aided in giving us something of a personal nature in common. There was the night when, on a whim and without permission, we had taken Joanne's family's car ninety miles up the coast to have breakfast in Santa Barbara and had got stranded seventy-five miles north of Los Angeles on our way back as a result of burning out the motor. Fortunately, Joanne's parents had been understanding and tolerant, but the four of us had suffered much embarrassment and had carefully avoided one another for a few days.

We seemed inclined to get stranded. One time, after driving Joanne's parents to Tijuana, Mexico, where they caught a plane for Mexico City, we drove seventy miles down to Ensenada, intending to return to Los Angeles that evening, and got stranded there because of a heavy fog. We were forced to rent rooms in a motel, the impropriety of which was the cause of many guilts and anxieties for the girls. Although everything was above-board, we never quite

felt their families fully accepted the innocence of the situation. Later, the recollection of the incidents invariably threw us into convulsive laughter.

But the only really significant experience, when we got right down to basics about things that touched both of us close to where it hurt, was the Sigma Nu incident. I had mentioned to Jimmy that I wanted to move from the bleak little co-op dormitory where I lived, and he had posed the possibility of my changing to fraternity life. Not wanting to offend him by revealing my sentiments on the subject of fraternities, I accepted his suggestion to lunch at the Sigma Nu house with him the following day.

The prospect of starting fraternity life in my Junior year seemed a bit ridiculous to me. It had always struck me as a college social game played by freshmen who thought they might find in it a sense of belonging that would be lacking outside. I was too old to fool myself into thinking I could belong anywhere merely by conforming to someone else's attitudes and patterns of conduct. If I wanted to belong, I wanted to belong because I was what I was, not because I was like some-one else. But there was the possibility that my theories were all wrong, so I would give it a try. Anyway, I reasoned, what harm could a little luncheon do? At least it was a free feed.

"What's your major, Bill?" asked one of the Sigma Nu officers seated next to me at the long dining-room table.

I had started off badly during the session before lunch. Jimmy had been unable to join me at the last minute, and on my own hook I felt terribly out of place. The ritualistic mechanics of entertaining and interrogating a prospective member were stiff and boring. Almost a half hour was spent reviewing the present and former Sigma Nu members who had attained fame through athletics. Since sports were not my meat, I found it very hard to do more than stare in wide-eyed wonderment as the house president reeled off the

long list of meaningless names. Occasionally, when a name had a familiar ring, I would nod enthusiastically, hoping to convey the impression that I thought the name truly symbolized greatness. The name-dropping session was generously interspersed with explanations of house traditions and rushing procedures. By the time we sat down to eat, I was completely lost for anything to say or do. What could I possibly offer an organization that was already so rich, so famous, so full of just about everything?

I turned to the very collegiate fellow who had asked the fatal question and replied, "I'm a Theater Arts major, Fred."

His name, one of fifty that had been thrown at me in the preceding half hour, was Don. My response and error hit the table with the subtle effect of a stink bomb. I wanted to leave.

After clearing his throat several times, Don explained indulgently, "We don't generally rush Theater Arts majors. I think there are only two in the house."

Someone rang a bell, and several lowerclassmen dressed in busboy jackets entered and began clearing the table. I wasn't finished with my dessert, but then, I really wasn't too hungry.

"Tell me, Bill," continued the inquisitor. "You would want to live in. You don't have a job, do you?"

I explained that I was in the process of getting a part-time job with the Columbia Broadcasting System in Hollywood. They were not impressed.

"Well, generally we don't like the guys to work. Too many outside interests keep them away from the house here. They can't participate in house activities and it interferes with their house chores. It seems to me, with a part-time job and all those Theater Arts rehearsals, you wouldn't be around here much."

Later, over dessert and coffee in the school cafeteria, I told Jimmy the awkward, clumsy way I had handled myself at the luncheon. I admitted that it was a pointless thing for me

to have tried, since I really could not have afforded the expense involved in joining a fraternity. And when I explained that I could never have endured their condescending attitudes, I thought I noticed a slightly bitter and understanding look in his eyes. I thanked him and apologized, confessing that I was just not cut out to be a fraternity boy. For the time being, I would have to content myself with the dormitory.

But despite the fellowship that seemed to be growing out of all these shared experiences, I still had the feeling that Jimmy Dean had been inflicted on me by Joanne's fancy for community dating. I felt it was solely on her account that I had accepted him. Not that there was anything wrong with the guy. He was nice enough, although he had a tendency to be a bit moody and sullen from time to time. But we seemed to have so little in common. With most of my friends, even some of the half-way variety at U.C.L.A., there had always been some sort of rapport, some slightly special means of communication. From my point of view, at least, there was none of that involved with Jimmy Dean.

The only thing that intrigued me about him was the way he often seemed to be on the verge of telling me something terribly significant, but decided to keep it until later.

Mostly because of the way he had been forced on me, I felt I wasn't being given the opportunity to choose for myself and I threw up defensive barriers of my own. But since I was in no position to be overly selective about friends, I didn't want to eliminate any potential one completely, regardless of how unsuitable he appeared. So I sat back and, in a totally selfish, uninterested way, began indulging Jimmy Dean as a potential, or at least a substitute friend. It never occurred to me that my attitude was as snobbishly selective as Sigma Nu's attitude had appeared to me.

As the bus bounced down Sunset Boulevard past the Beverly Hills Hotel, Jimmy repeated, "I said, I think we'd

make a good team.”

“Team?” I inquired with a slightly suspicious tone.

“Yeah. We sort of complement each other,” he explained. “You’re a pretty smart guy. I mean, you know a lot of things I should know. And there’s a lot I could help you with, I suppose. I guess what I’m driving at is, well, if we stuck together—you know, combined forces—it might make for easier going. I mean, look what happened tonight.”

Earlier that day, having separate ventures in Hollywood, we had caught a ride into town with another student. For over a month I had been trying to penetrate the formidable fortress of the broadcasting world, the Columbia Broadcasting System. Another student from U.C.L.A. had got a job there as an usher and had convinced me that this was an easy road into the professional world. He had introduced me to the head usher at C.B.S., whose reaction had been favorable and who had intimated that there might be a spot for me in the near future. On the advice of my school friend, I had been making every-other-day treks into Hollywood for the purpose of pestering the head usher into submission. Today, after about five weeks of dedicated perseverance, I had begun to see a definite weakening; the fortress walls were beginning to crumble.

Jimmy had been advised by another aspiring actor on campus to see a casting director at the Jerry Fairbanks television studios in Hollywood, where they were in the process of casting several television films. Today had been his second try at seeing the man, but he had not been able to get into his office. This time, however, he had been given a definite appointment for the following week.

After leaving Fairbanks, Jimmy had joined me at C.B.S., where I was participating in one of the C.B.S. Radio Workshop productions. Each week the Workshop produced scripts which were often aired, or entered in the internetwork workshop competition at the end of each

broadcasting season. Having spent so much time around C.B.S. in the recent weeks in pursuit of employment, I had come to know some Workshop people and had finally been invited, in their desperate need for any calibre of trained actors, to join the group. When Jimmy arrived that afternoon, I introduced him around. When they learned that he, too, was an actor, they asked him to read for a part in the following week's production. He read well and was cast in the show.

Now, riding with him on the bus, I thought about what he had just said and admitted to myself that he was right, in some ways. In the short time we had known each other, I had come to realize that Jimmy lacked a good amount of basic knowledge. He didn't seem to know much, other than general information, about literature, or even the theater, and although we had never discussed music, politics, or philosophy, I felt he was not well informed on those subjects either. I, having been somewhat of a precocious child myself, had had an early introduction to most of those subjects and was, for my nineteen years, still a bit precocious—at least I liked to think so. At any rate, he had succeeded in flattering my ego by admitting that he could benefit from knowing me. I had to agree with him on that point.

On the other hand, I could not imagine what in the world he felt he could offer me. Since I had spent some time as a child on a farm, there was little he could tell me about farm life, and little I really cared to know at that stage. Certainly his Santa Monica City College experiences could not be considered awesome. He had not traveled as widely as I had and his educational background was not as complete as mine. I put up all my defenses and reasoned, in what way, then, could Jimmy Dean “help” me?

“If you hadn't brought me into the Workshop today,” he continued, “I never would've got a crack at that part. And that's good experience. See what I mean?”

I stared at him blankly.

"Look," he said, "You've been talking about getting yourself an agent. Well, what if I took you over to meet Isabel Draesmer? She might take you on, just like me. We wouldn't be competition for one another. You're dark and I'm light; we're two entirely different types. That's the kind of stuff I mean."

Now he was making some sense. During the run of *Macbeth* a small, independent actors' agent, Isabel Draesmer, had appeared backstage one night and informed him that she had seen him and was impressed with his talent. She had left her card and told him to get in touch with her, if he was interested in representation. Jimmy hadn't wasted any time. Within a week he had gone to see her and had become one of her clients. She was not the biggest agent in town, but she was his. And now he was offering her to me as well. That sounded pretty appealing.

"You know," he confessed, "the other night at a beer bust at the house, they started riding me. I said I didn't like the stuff they wanted me to do for initiation. They started on me, about being a Theater Arts major and all. I guess I can't take a riding. It happened once before in high school. I took a poke at a kid and was expelled from school for a few days."

"What happened at the beer bust?" I said.

"I slugged a guy," he admitted modestly.

I felt like shaking his hand, or presenting him with a medal, but I withheld my enthusiastic approval and listened as he went on.

"They asked me to move out—kicked me out. Now I've got to find another place to live. I was thinking maybe we could find a place together. There ought to be lots of cheap little apartments down around Santa Monica. It'd be a lot cheaper, sharing a place, than what it's costing us now. What do you say?"

“Aha!” I exclaimed to myself. “The motive!”

I began to mull it over. At first, my defensive rationalization process insisted that there was nothing this funny little guy could offer me, nothing I couldn't do without. Then, perhaps, the essential honesty of my subconscious mind forced a thought into my head: “You know perfectly well where he can help you. Sure, he could introduce you to his agent, but that's not the important thing. There's something about this guy, a quality you lack. There's a strength, an assurance, a dedication, an independence here. He has about him the air of a man who is quietly determined to grow, to develop, never to stop, always to go on trying. It's an influence you need, and you know it.”

Not caring to dwell on thoughts of my imperfection, I turned my attention to the more ego-gratifying aspects of the proposition. Here was a guy who thought I was a “pretty smart guy,” someone from whom he could derive something. I let the thought roll around my mind.

“You know, Jimmy,” I beamed, “you're probably right. Maybe we would make a good team.”

Jimmy chuckled and extended his hand, and much like a couple of tycoons finalizing the momentous merger of two key industries, we shook on it—each with his own reservations.

As the bus jogged along on the long ride back to campus, Jimmy stared fixedly out the window for a time. Then he turned to me abruptly and said, “I've never told this to anyone else. I guess I always thought people would say I was crazy, if they heard it, so I just never told anyone.

“Have you ever had the feeling that it's not in your hands? I mean, do you ever just know you've got something to do and you have no control over it? All I know is I've got to do something. I don't exactly know what it is yet. But when the time comes, I'll know. I've got to keep trying until I hit the right thing. See what I mean?”

"It's like, I know I want to be an actor, but that isn't it. That's not all. Just being an actor or a director, even a good one, isn't enough. There's got to be more than just that.

"I figure there's nothing you can't do, if you put everything into it. The only thing that stops people from getting what they want is themselves. They put too many barriers in their paths. It's like they're afraid to succeed. In a way, I guess I know why. There's a terrific amount of responsibility that goes with success, and the greater the success, the greater the responsibility. People don't want that kind of responsibility.

"But I think, if you're not afraid, if you take everything you are, everything worthwhile in you, and direct it at one goal, one ultimate mark, you've got to get there. If you start accepting the world, letting things happen to you, around you, things will happen like you never dreamed they'd happen.

"That's why I'm going to stick to this thing. I don't want to be just a good actor. I don't even want to be just the best. I want to grow and grow, grow so tall nobody can reach me. Not to prove anything, but just to go where you ought to go when you devote your whole life and all you are to one thing.

"Maybe this sounds crazy or egocentric or something to you, but I think there's only one true form of greatness for a man. If a man can bridge the gap between life and death, I mean, if he can live on after he's died, then maybe he was a great man. When they talk about success, they talk about reaching the top. Well, there is no top. You've got to go on and on, never stop at any point. To me the only success, the only greatness for a man is in immortality. To have your work remembered in history, to leave something in this world that will last for centuries—that's greatness.

"I want to grow away from all the petty little world we exist in. I want to leave it all behind, all the petty little thoughts about the unimportant little things, things that'll

be forgotten a hundred years from now anyway. There's a level somewhere where everything is solid and important. I'm going to try to reach up there and find a place I know is pretty close to perfect, a place where this whole messy world should be, could be, if it'd just take the time to learn.

"Well, then-there-now, I shot my wad. Now you know what a nut I am."

"Meet another inmate," I said, and we both began to laugh.

As we got off the bus and walked toward the campus, I was smiling. Want him or not, I was thinking, here he was. At long last, a friend, or, more correctly, a teammate—and, most intriguing, a teammate with a dream.

In the bleak reality of daylight the fanciful dreams Jimmy had put into my head the night before were becoming remote and vague. Slowly they had faded, as we walked systematically up and down the streets of Santa Monica in search of a suitable apartment, a place out of which was to grow a whole new life of adventure.

My optimism had soured gradually as we discovered that the available apartments were neither cheap nor nice. The few places we had found that were comfortable and pleasant enough were far beyond our financial range, and the majority of vacancies we had seen were either dreary or downright grim. Already the minute complexities of so mundane a chore as finding a place to live had discouraged me; if so simple a task could become so difficult, how could we hope to muster the courage and strength to survive the struggle for a thing as involved as a career?

Just as we were about to give up the search for the day, we came to a clean, white court-apartment in front of which there was a sign announcing an available bachelor apartment.

The landlady was a woman in her middle years, but a certain vitality and warmth gave her a youthful appearance.

She led us through the neatly landscaped court and passed us into the apartment advertised.

"Well, boys, I'm afraid that's the only bachelor we have available right now," she apologized, locking the door of the dark little room with the drab furniture and leading us back through the court toward the street.

We thanked her for her trouble and explained that we had hoped to find something more desirable. As we turned to walk away, she seemed to be struggling with a thought.

"Wait a minute," she called, when we reached the street. She walked quickly to us with a special look on her face. "I think I might have something you boys would like. We hadn't planned on renting it, but I think you'd appreciate it. I wouldn't rent it to anyone who didn't appreciate it. If you like it, I'll ask my husband if he wants to let you have it. It's right this way." There was a curious air of mystery in her manner. She made her proposal with a tauntingly smug and knowing attitude, much like the devil bargaining for a soul by tantalizing him with something he knew very well was irresistible. I was unnerved by the feeling that she obviously knew exactly what my reaction would be. As we followed her down a small walkway along the back side of the apartment building, Jimmy gave me a glance that indicated he, too, felt a bit as though we were being led into some enchanted world by this oversized Santa Monica leprechaun.

She didn't speak again until we reached the top of the narrow wooden stairway that rose from the end of the concrete walk to the top of the apartment building.

"I'll have these cut away, if you want. Personally, I prefer it this way," she confided, referring to the palm fronds hanging from a palm tree which grew alongside the stairway. They completely blocked the passage to the catwalk which led from the top of the stairs to whatever lay beyond the reed-like screen they formed. With a simple sweep of her hand she brushed the fronds aside and

announced, "Our Penthouse!" There, before us, aloof and apart from the world below, was an almost miniature penthouse apartment which had been constructed atop the main building. Perhaps it was the whole mood that had been created, or the seemingly unsupported stairway and high catwalk, or the singular aloneness of the structure, or just my vivid imagination, but I had the feeling that the entire penthouse was suspended in air. The view to the front was of house tops, tree tops, and, untouchably beyond, the ocean; the view to the sides was of the tops of more •houses and trees, only the tops, it seemed, of a life below. What a superior, elevated sense it gave!

The entrance door to the apartment was subnormally short, about five feet, giving the impression that it had been made for a less imposing creature than a human being. To pass through it we had to crouch slightly and step down into the room beyond.

The apartment consisted of three rooms, artfully done in a Spanish or Mexican motif. The slanted, beamed ceiling sloped from about five feet at the rear of the apartment to about eight feet at the front. On the ceiling, between the beams, intricate Aztec patterns and ceramic designs had been carefully hand-painted. Original oil paintings with Indian and Mexican themes hung here and there on the walls of the three rooms. The chest-level kitchen sink and drainboard were masterfully designed in hand-laid Italian tile, and for the convenience of one who did not want the sink at chest level there was a foot- high, six-feet-long redwood stool or bench to stand on while working at the sink. Meals were taken at the little bar which separated the kitchen from the living room. The bar and the redwood stools that surrounded it, the kitchen and living room cabinets, all the cabinet work in the apartment had been done entirely by hand and had been executed with the same care and taste as the rest of the *decor*.

"It's my pet," our guide explained. "I have a Master's in Art from the University of West Virginia. I spend most of my time fixing this place up. It's sort of a hobby of mine."

She didn't have to ask if we liked it. From the moment she swept aside the palm fronds, I knew this was the place for me. The charm of the place had captured Jimmy, too. He pranced about the rooms, touching this, feeling that, asking questions about everything. He sat on all the furniture, expanding as though it were made for him, natural for him. He flung his legs over the arms of chairs, testing various comfortable positions. He sank completely into the alcove bed off the living room and appraised it for length and degree of privacy. He flopped on the bed in the entrance room, rejecting it with an obvious frown of disapproval because of its middle-of-things position. He bounded through the little doorway which led to the spacious and secluded sun deck outside. He sprang back into the apartment and looked out every window. He turned on the shower; he flushed the toilet; he looked into the refrigerator; he stuck his head into the oven; he opened every cupboard door. Then, having examined every inch of the place thoroughly, he sat himself on the floor in the middle of the living room.

"We'll take it," he announced emphatically; and then added with an imploring boyish tone, "If it's okay with your husband."

From his arbitrary attitude it was clear that money was to be no obstacle—neither his lack of it nor mine. While our fairy godmother was off checking with the top man, we rationalized that, although the rent was much more than we had decided we could afford, this was just too perfect a place to start our lives of dedication to let a little thing like money stand in the way. By the time the landlady returned, we had successfully convinced ourselves that the money would appear somehow. When she proclaimed that the penthouse was ours, we happily turned over to her

practically every cent we had between us—enough, at any rate, to cover the first month's rent.

Then, with a smile that showed her satisfaction at having found two such worthy tenants, she left us to re-examine our prize. I turned around, expecting to find it had all turned into something straight out of a Charles Addams cartoon, but found, to my relief, that it was as charming and inspirational as it had been a moment before. As an automatic reflex, my fingers stroked my empty wallet. But, in spite of the pain in my stomach and the weakness in my legs, I felt strangely right about what I had just done. Although I hesitated to admit it to myself, I felt this was the beginning of a new and exciting era in my life.

The happy events of the following week seemed to lend credibility to our extravagant adolescent dreams of a future of fulfillment. First of all, the impregnable walls of the Columbia Broadcasting System had given away to my batterings. With passive uninterest the head usher had casually informed me, on one of my frequent visits, that I was hired. Few have ever been more grateful than I at that moment, or more impressed. Then, on the heels of my triumph, Jimmy returned one day to announce that the casting director at Jerry Fairbanks had promised him a role in their forthcoming television film. Although his excitement manifested itself in a less exuberant fashion than mine, his spirits were sufficiently high to create the illusion that he, too, was slightly tipsy.

I let my imagination wander a bit and secretly satisfied myself with the explanation that all this good fortune had been brought on by the penthouse. But no matter what the cause here it was, proof; certainly this was proof enough that Jimmy's dream could work. Now there would be no limit to the future, no barrier that could not be overcome. With an eye on the very top rung of a ladder that was infinite in length, we would climb, never looking back, never

fearing defeat. All it took was confidence, and for that Jimmy was there to remind me, and I him.

Brimming with more self-confidence and assurance than I had known in years, I put into action a plan I had long been nurturing. Several months before, I had been introduced to the actor James Whitmore. In the weeks that followed I had had the opportunity to see him a few more times. I had listened with fascination as he answered questions about his career and his recent success in Hollywood. He had been a student at the Actors Wing and Actors Studio in New York and had been cast in the Broadway production of *Command Decision*. He had come to Hollywood and played a role in *Battleground*, for which he had just won a nomination from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences as best supporting actor of the year. He liked Hollywood, but often confessed a desire for the mental stimulation of New York. Most of all, he missed the Actors Studio and the chance to study his art.

As a result of our several talks, the seed of an idea began to germinate in my mind. It was a sound idea, but I lacked the courage to cultivate it. But now, armed with my newly found confidence, I plunged into it headlong.

I placed a strategic call to Whitmore and made arrangements to meet him the following morning at the Brentwood Country Mart, where it was his custom to read the morning papers over coffee every day.

I arrived before Whitmore. Over a hot cup of coffee I tried to clear my morning brain and nervously rehearsed what I intended to say. Somehow, in the hot glare of the morning sun, my plan, as I had outlined it during the sleepless night before, had lost its perfection. Now it seemed completely unreasonable. Fears and trepidations mounted in me. I was on the verge of quitting the place, when Whitmore entered the scene and sat down at the table.

There were a few minutes of casual chatter about his habit of coming to this place every morning. Hard as I tried,

I could not relax and warm to the casual discussion.

"Jim, I've got to come right to the point," I blurted abruptly.

"If this whole thing sounds stupid to you—I mean, if I'm presuming too much by asking—just let me know, and we can forget it."

I stopped to give him ample time to digest what I had said and to leave. He showed no reaction but interest, and just sat there, waiting. I drew a breath and remembered what my mother always used to say to me: "Ask! The worst they can do is say no!"

In a jumbled fashion, entirely unlike the neat little speech I had spent half the night rehearsing, I tried to explain my plan. I reminded him of the talks we had had in the past two months. He had complained of not being able to study now that he was away from New York. What a pity it was that there was no really fine acting school in all of Hollywood. The Actors Lab had been a remarkably good school, but had closed down, and no one in Hollywood had come forth with a new school, at least not one that had endured.

I explained that I had found at U.C.L.A. many dedicated young actors who were dissatisfied with the inadequate acting training they were getting in their college curriculum. Often I had heard them talk, and joined in the complaining; often I had heard a cry go out for a new, *avant-garde*, or at least progressive acting school, somewhat like Lee Strasberg's and Elia Kazan's new Actors Studio in New York. I stressed to him that we were all sincere in our desire to learn our craft, but were frustrated, since there seemed no way to grow in a town that lacked the practical means to help us grow.

"What I'm getting at is this," I concluded. "Since you miss studying so much, you must be able to understand how we tool about this need for a school, or, at least, a class. Would you be willing to head a class? Would you teach us?"

Before I had a chance to qualify, to elaborate on my proposal, Whitmore was talking animatedly of what a fine idea it thought this was and how we could go about it. He felt we could meet twice or three times a week at first. Perhaps we could get one of the meeting rooms over the Mart for our classroom. As a matter of fact, he was sure we could. Why didn't I get together about eight or ten—we wouldn't want too large a class—from U.C.L.A. and we could have our first meeting the following week.

"One thing, though," he warned. "You guys aren't to consider me a teacher. I'll be more like a guide, showing you what I learned. But, for the most part, let's just say I'll be studying right along with you."

Within fifteen minutes it was settled, and I was on my way home, riding Cloud Seven all the way. How easy it had been! I had hardly made my proposal when he snatched it up and began improving upon it, beyond my expectations.

My mind raced with thoughts of the preparations. Actually, all that remained was the comparatively simple task of handpicking eight or ten people to invite to join the class. Since I had been incubating this idea for several weeks, I had had sufficient time to draw up a long mental list of potential class members. Discreetly, I would select from my list only those who were the most dedicated to their art, and the most talented—plus, of course, my friend Jimmy Dean. Whitmore would arrange for the classroom and let me know what nights would be available to us. And that was all there was to do.

It was so neat and clean, almost as though it had been planned without my help. It hardly seemed possible that, within a week, ten of us would be intensely involved in the serious study of the art of acting, being guided by a successful disciple of the famous "Method" or "Stanislavsky" school. I was in a state of exhilaration that seemed as though it could last forever.

During the first few weeks in the Penthouse, Jimmy and I had spent a lot of time together, and were generally getting to know one another. I had often roomed with guys before while going to school and had found the experience very revealing. There is a lot you learn from people, when you have lived with them. Usually your roommate starts confiding in you and, before you know it, he is not the same person you thought he was. Sometimes he would be better; sometimes worse. As the result of several unfortunate incidents in the past, I was determined to find out, in as short a time as possible, what, if any, problems I was going to have on my hands with Jimmy. Spending so much time together, talking at length about things, was the best way I knew to get to know him.

Despite the apparent difference in our personality structures, I was finding that I really liked him. There was something basically honest about him, something that made it easy for me to get along with him. There were few of the usual pretentious fronts that most guys try to put up. He never attempted to impress me with his family background, or, for that matter, with any of his background. From time to time he would expand with pride over some above-average accomplishment, like the fact he had won the Indiana State Forensics Contest and had been sent to the National Forensics Tournament in Colorado; or the fact that he considered himself a crack basketball player in high school; or the fact that he had successfully attracted several uncommonly beautiful girls; or possibly just the fact that he owned a motorcycle back in Indiana and considered himself an excellent rider. These little pieces of ego were never dropped with an arrogant attitude, but rather gently rolled over in his mind, as he relived what had been to him remarkable and enjoyable experiences. If he liked something, there didn't seem to be any reason why I shouldn't enjoy hearing about it. And there wasn't, since he had been indulgent enough to hear me out in my

reminiscent moods. Most often, his delivery and manner were so modest and boyish that no one could have been offended or bored by anything he boasted. Paradoxically, it was his subtle modesty and vital interest in everything he had done and would do that helped me bridge the deep gap of resentment that had separated us from the outset of our relationship.

Fortunately, Jimmy was aware of his need for growth and was attempting to do something about it. He turned to me for assistance from time to time, just as a means of getting started on the long road to fulfillment. Being inherently lazy, I was happy to let him prod me on, plying me with questions, half of which I couldn't answer without doing some thinking or research. It was good for me to get off my dead mental haunches for a change. Jimmy became a stimulus and kept the mental ball rolling for both of us. He persisted relentlessly in his efforts to learn everything as quickly as possible, more often than not dissipating his energies by grabbing in all directions at one time. But whenever possible I offered my limited knowledge, frequently following along after him into new fields where neither of us had ventured before. It seemed an ideal arrangement.

We took to the habit of reading aloud to one another from various plays, partly in an effort to become acquainted with more theater literature, and partly in an effort to improve Jimmy's diction. It soon became apparent that his diction wasn't nearly as sadly in need of attention as his vocabulary. At first, because it seemed the easiest and quickest way, I tried to define, in my own inadequate way, the words he didn't understand. But after a while we resorted to Webster, since Jimmy had several times, after checking on my off-hand definitions, caught me way off the mark. And so, on we read, improving his diction and *our* vocabulary.

We had moved into the Penthouse on a Friday and were unable to get the electrical power turned on until the

following Monday, so the first week end we were forced to use candles for our light. The effect was so pleasing that we decided to make it a practice to use only candlelight at least one night every week. Thus, we could cut down on our light bill and retain a charming and inspirational custom. Often on "Lightless Fridays" we would sit around the apartment with our girls, or other friends, and read and talk well into the morning hours. The mood was warm and friendly, and there was always the feeling that something important was happening to every one of us.

Shortly after we moved into the Penthouse, Jimmy brought out a painting he had done. It was an oil and portrayed the skeleton of a man, stretched over with nothing but horrid green skin, who was standing waist-deep in the mire which flowed through a long sewer-like tunnel that diminished in perspective. His head and one arm raised upward, as if pleading to be saved, he was slowly melting into and becoming part of the very mire that flowed beneath him.

Another work of art he showed me was a caricature of man as a great round ashtray. From his torso, which was the base of the ashtray, extended two long elastic arms, in the hands of which he held a huge cigar and several burning cigarettes. His head, which rested atop his long elastic neck that rose from the center of the tray, consisted of nothing but one huge mouth that was, in reality, a hole right through his head. The huge cigar went entirely through the hole in his head, or mouth, and there was smoke everywhere.

The over-all character of his work was Daliesque. To our sophisticated world there would not have seemed anything entirely new in his distorted images, or the thoughts that went to create them. But in Jimmy's realm of thinking at the time, with his limited experience in the sophisticated world outside, the images were the most off-beat, the most

unusual he could conceive. Although the work was well done and showed a certain aptitude for art, it did not merit too much attention, but the subject matter drew my interest. All one had to do was examine samples of modern art from as far back as 1920, or even 1910

the more popular works of Braque, Picasso, and Dali—to realize where Jimmy had found his source of inspiration. It seemed to me he had simply allowed his active mind and creative imagination to run freely along the prescribed lines of distortion so prevalent in the works of the modernists, who are still considered by the layman to be weird, unique, and controversial. With Jimmy's temperament and flair for the dramatic, it would not have suited his fancy to paint, or think, what was conventional or common; it was more fun making people think he was different. Then too, there was something to this strange way of expressing his inner feelings. Perhaps, in some psychological or metaphysical way, it brought forth from the depths of his subconscious the frightening truth about the way he looked at the world about him. So, as much as the effect of his work pleased him, the cause of it intrigued him.

Although the Penthouse was constantly a scene of intense study and intellectual calisthenics (often misguided and striven for, but always honest in intent), it was also home base for a flurry of constructive activity in the cold world of reality outside. I was all wrapped up in the glory of my new part-time job at C.B.S., and Jimmy was happily pursuing local casting directors with the help of his agent. He had kept his bargain by introducing me to his agent, who had agreed to take me on as one of her clients. Since neither of us had gone the professional route before, we lacked the fundamental professional equipment, especially photographs. There were appointments with the least expensive photographer in town, appointments with casting directors, audition scenes to be rehearsed, and all the usual mechanics of preparing for a career in pictures. In the

melee of motion and activity the physically static process of developing our minds had to be relegated to the late, late hours.

Somewhere along the line, U.C.L.A. seemed to be getting lost in the rush. We were both cutting too many classes in order to attend to our outside affairs. Since I was almost through my four-year run, this did not disturb me too much. But, although Jimmy felt that a formal education was only a superficial means to an end, he was occasionally concerned over his lack of interest and bad attendance record.

The solution to his problem came in a righteous bit of rationalization. The Theater Arts Department had been planning a production of *Dark of the Moon* in which Jimmy hoped with all his heart he would be cast to play the meaty role of the haunting Witch Boy. When the final casting was announced, and he had lost the part, he was bitterly, spitefully disappointed. The injustice the Theater Arts Department had done him became a perfect excuse for him to justify his lack of interest in school as a whole.

"Anyway," he rationalized one night as we drove to the Brentwood Country Mart for the first meeting of the Whitmore class, "I'll bet I get a lot more out of this class than I'd ever get out of the T.A. Department!"

There wasn't one of the nine of us who wouldn't have echoed his sentiments. As we entered that first meeting, a mood of quiet awe and nervous excitement permeated the room.

"I feel like it's the Judgment Day," confided one talented little girl. "I mean, what if I find out I haven't got it?"

Whitmore arrived, casual, relaxed, ready for work, and was confronted by nine tense, awed, impenetrable, useless blobs of humanity. Either by perception or experience he spotted the trouble immediately and took command. Gently, slowly, smoothly, he began to loosen us, ease the strain, warm us, and make us receptive. Simple conversation, a little humor, some extra personal interest, confidence,

patience—these were his weapons. Like a craftsman he drew us out, first as a group, then as individuals. Within an hour we were his, pliable, receptive, ready. Then, seizing the opportunity, he smashed the spell with some violent words of realism.

“Learning to act is no child’s game, so forget the romance part. Acting is a craft, a serious profession. And to learn any craft you have to apply yourself. It takes time, study, practice, patience. Most of all it takes hard work. And sweat. If it’s glory you’re after, you won’t find it learning to act. You may not even find it in acting. But if it’s a sense of fulfillment, a sense of personal gratification you want, there is no other profession in the world that can give you more. At least, that’s the way I feel about it.

“If you are dedicated to your craft, you work until you’re ready to drop, and then go on and work some more. By the time you’re ready to call yourself an actor, you’ll be so dead tired you probably won’t even care about the applause. But you’ll feel good, like you feel after a workout, when you ache all over and you’re aware of every inflated muscle in your body. It’ll hurt, but it’ll hurt good.

“We’re going to work here. That’s what we’re here for. I’m not qualified to teach you, but I can pass on to you what I’ve learned. I’ll try to explain it the way I see it. Maybe it’ll make sense, maybe it won’t. That’s partly up to me and partly up to you. If we’re lucky, we might accomplish something.’

There were no lessons in acting that first night. The time was spent getting to know one another and having Whitmore dispel any nonsensical ideas we might have had about this class being the source of a magic that would bring us to the ultimate secret of success. We left that place with only one thought in mind: We want to learn. There was no doubt in my mind that there would be perfect attendance at the next meeting.

The money we had hoped would come from somewhere to pay the extravagant rent on our Penthouse made a timely appearance. My share, of course, was scraped together out of the pittance C.B.S. paid me, which could hardly be called a salary. I was still grateful enough for the job so that money, or lack of it, seemed unimportant. For a while, though, it looked as though Jimmy wasn't going to be able to make the rent. The unexpectedly large first rent payment had practically drained him of every cent he had, and the expense of the photographs and other necessary expenditures completed the job. During (lie last week, he was forced to borrow pin money from me. Hut just as rent day appeared on the calendar, so did the cash to meet it.

A call came in from the Jerry Fairbanks studio, informing Jimmy that he had been cast in a religious film, *Hill Number One*, to be shot the following week. *Although he had done a TV soft drink commercial in which he danced around a juke box with a girl and a guy named Nick Adams, he considered this film to be his first professional job and was very excited about it. His excitement didn't manifest itself in the usual way. lie didn't talk much about the job, or seem to be particularly overjoyed. As a matter of fact, after the initial excitement had worn off, he did just the opposite, becoming moody and sullen, refusing to talk about it at all. As the week went by and the day of shooting approached, I could see the nervous tension build in him to a point where it became difficult for me to communicate with him. I sometimes had the feeling that he thought that by talking about the job, or admitting that it even existed, he would lose it. Once or twice it seemed to me that he was hoarding his pleasure and excitement for fear that I, or someone else, might steal it from him, if he left it unguarded.*

A few days before Jimmy was to report to the studio to start the picture, he learned one of the most important lessons of his career in the Whitmore acting class.

During the first few classes, we had done little but exercises in concentration. Slowly, with the use of these exercises, Whitmore had demonstrated the importance of complete concentration.

The most vivid example was given one night when he instructed one of the students to get up and walk around the room in a large circle. The girl rose and, in a terribly self-conscious manner, walked nervously around the room,

adjusting her clothing, finding it a problem to dispose of her cumbersome hands, occasionally correcting her posture, blushing slightly, and smiling apologetically. She presented, on the whole, an awkward, uninteresting picture of a very self-conscious girl marching around the room pointlessly.

After a few minutes of this, Whitmore drew her aside and whispered something into her ear. Once again he told her to walk around the room. This time, however, she became intensely interesting to us. It was obvious that she had completely forgotten herself. Her eyes were fixed ahead of her and often closed or tightened, as though she were straining or struggling with her inner thoughts. Her body was poised, though she was slightly tense and clenched her fists tightly. From time to time a smile would cross her lips, but then again she would purse them and strain some more. We leaned closer to watch the vague movements she made with her lips, movements that made her resemble a mute trying desperately to communicate what he could not say. After an appropriate interval, Whitmore had her take her seat. He asked us to analyze the difference between the girl's first and second walks around the room. We discussed the amazing difference at length and agreed unanimously that she was most certainly more interesting during her second walk.

"That's because she was doing something the second time," Whitmore explained. "The first time around she was dull and uninteresting, because she had nothing to do—inside. But the second time, she was concentrating. There was something happening inside. You, as an audience, could perceive it, sense it. She was no longer aware of herself. She was somewhere else, doing something that drew your interest and attention. She was thinking."

Then he instructed the girl to tell us what she had been doing.

"I was reciting the words to The Star-Spangled Banner to myself," she confessed.

It was an impressive lesson in the power of concentration. To think that a girl walking around the room and merely reciting to herself the words to our national anthem could become so interesting made us all marvel anew at the dynamic force within that word "concentration."

But the full impact of the meaning of concentration didn't hit Jimmy until a few nights later. It was the first night we were to try improvisations. Whitmore would set up a hypothetical situation between two people, and two of the students would get up before the class and, using the motivations he had given them, improvise a scene.

Jimmy had been fascinated by the power of concentration as demonstrated in some of the preceding classes and jumped up eagerly when it was our turn to do an improvisation. Whitmore took him aside and told him, in secret, that he was a college student who had stolen a wrist watch. He had taken the watch to a jeweler to have it repaired, but had learned that the police were hot on his trail. In order to avoid being caught, he had to leave town on the next bus, which departed in fifteen minutes. It was his job to get that watch back from the jeweler and catch the bus at any cost.

Out of Jimmy's hearing, Whitmore told me I was a jeweler who had been told by the police to be on the lookout for a young man of Jimmy's description. Such a young man had brought a watch into my shop to be repaired a few days before, and it was already my suspicion that he was the watch thief. When Jimmy showed up, I was to call the police and detain him until they could arrive.

We started the improvisation, but it was as flat and as uninteresting as the girl's first walk around the room. Jimmy went into it with too much mechanical enthusiasm, greatly overdoing the acting of a stealthy thief. I, on the other hand, went through the motions of calling the police and trying to stall for time, but to little avail. Either I would give him the watch because I had run out of reasonable

excuses for not giving it to him, or he would leave without it, not knowing any more ways of getting it.

Whitmore stopped us after several weak attempts and explained what we were not doing correctly. Somewhere in his explanation he hit upon just the right words. He spoke about a type of concentration we had never thought existed, a concentration so deep, so complete that nothing in the world could deter us from our purposes. Through his explanation, it was obvious that Jimmy began to understand clearly what he was driving at. When Whitmore instructed us to begin again, Jimmy prepared for the scene quietly, calmly, with an air of detachment.

We tried the scene again. At first, the apparent change that had come over Jimmy was almost frightening to me. With grim determination he set himself to the task of getting that watch. It was as though nothing else in the world mattered to him. I was all for handing the thing over to him to avoid trouble, but I was obliged to refuse him. The more he insisted, the more I refused. He became insulting and profane and called me names he knew I didn't like to be called.

I blew up. I got into a rage, swore back at him, and called him everything I could think of.

He reached across the counter for me, and the fight that ensued had to be stopped by Whitmore and the others.

When it was over, we were both amazed at ourselves. We had actually believed in what we were doing to the point of physical violence. I felt electrically refreshed, as though I had been given a shock treatment. Jimmy remained at a high level of nervous excitement for a while, but soon after the meeting broke up he slipped into a state of depression. The experience, although revealing and rewarding, had been physically and mentally exhausting.

The lesson made a profound impression on Jimmy. Until that time, he had always felt he understood most things, once he was made aware of them. But for the first time in

his life, he realized that to understand was not sufficient; to be able to apply what you understood was the ultimate goal. It was no longer simply a matter of knowing the mechanics of acting and understanding the psychological techniques. Now it had become a problem of translating the mechanics and techniques into reality: a matter of applying them. He had always thought acting was something he understood, but now it was something he could actually do—and for the first time acting made sense.

He carried his newly acquired ability into the filming of *Hill Number One*. He approached the role of young John the Baptist with a comprehension and perception he had never known before, employing his yet-unperfected but still potent power of concentration. When the film was finished, he was confident that he had done well. The proof of that would come at Easter, when the film was to be released.

The money from *Hill Number One* disappeared as quickly as it had appeared, but at least it had taken care of another month's rent. The bulk of my available cash, too, had been depleted by the rent. The rest of our resources went in paying off the loans we had made to last out the preceding lean weeks and in clearing up the utility bills. Although I was relieved that the rent was paid, I realized that unless another miracle took place, we were destined to starve to death, comfortably.

Jimmy became subject to more frequent periods of depression and would slip off into a silent mood at least once each day. Perhaps it was the letdown after making his first film, or perhaps it was just the lack of funds, that brought it on. If I Inn! thought it difficult to communicate with him at other times in the past, I had never known such lack of communication as existed during his fits of depression. For my own peace of mind I found it wiser to ignore him, or avoid him completely, going on about my own

business. I knew that if he wanted me or needed me for something, he would come out of his shell.

Nonetheless, it was disturbing to me to realize that he was obviously suffering and that there was nothing I could do for him. He would sit in his room, sit there and stare into space for hours. I made several attempts to get through to him, usually only when necessary, but rarely got more than a grunt or a distant stare for a response. Very often the situation would become unbearable, and anger would grow in me. It would subside when I thought that these deep silences might be exercises in concentration, or manifestations of his need for quietly digesting all that his mind was absorbing so rapidly.

I became even more concerned when he started taking long walks late at night. He would stroll down to Venice Amusement Pier on the beach and sit for hours watching the people flic re. For a while, he would observe the young couples playing games on the pier, he would study the mumbling drunks and winos, or sketch the Santa Monica hoodlums as they would attempt to bring terror to the peaceful atmosphere of the fun palaces. Then, forgetting himself completely, he would slip surreptitiously into one of the scenes and become a part of it, swigging wine with a drunk, chatting over coffee with a tired beach-stand waitress, or challenging one of the hoods to a game on the pier. Sometimes it would be dawn before his night walks would end and he would return, falling into his bed exhausted and content.

Invariably he would snap to after a sleep. Often he would come out of his depression after only a few hours. But, whichever the case, he would be as normal as before, never acknowledging the fact that he had caused me, or anyone else, concern. It never seemed to occur to him that his moodiness might have worried or offended someone. His moods were over as abruptly as they started, and when they were over they were forgotten.

The enchantment of the Penthouse wore thin as life became more routine. I settled down to my job at C.B.S. and started attending classes at U.C.L.A. more regularly. Jimmy went about the business of getting more work, but unsuccessfully. Every day we would hop into the old '39 Chevy his father had picked up for him and head into Hollywood. It was agreed that I would pay for the gas in return for transportation to and from work. The fuel would then enable Jimmy to drive around town from studio to studio, calling on casting directors. I had lost heart in the pursuit of acting jobs, since it was clear that my lack of credits would keep me from getting jobs.

Before long, money became a serious problem. Most of Jimmy's cash was gone and mine was being eaten up by the gas tank. What was left was barely enough to buy food. There were days when the larder was completely empty. Then we were forced to synthesize suitable substitutes for food. Jimmy introduced me to a delectable dish consisting of dry oatmeal mixed to taste with mayonnaise or jam. We had borrowed ourselves friendless, so there was little we could do but accept our destitute condition and make do with what we had.

Some relief came from a girl I had met at C.B.S. and was dating in the least expensive fashion. Her name was Beverly Wills and she was the daughter of the famous comedienne, Joan Davis. Beverly was playing the role of Fuffy Adams on the weekly C.B.S. radio comedy *Junior Miss*. After a few friendly chats over coffee and a school picnic, Beverly and I were hitting it off pretty well. The occasional dinners taken til her mother's beautiful Bel Air home were welcomed indeed by my shriveled stomach.

Fortunately, Beverly had a girl friend who became Jimmy's partner on our frequent double dates, which consisted mostly of swimming in Beverly's pool; eating Beverly's, or rather Joan's, food; listening to Beverly's records; watching Beverly's television set; and drinking Joan's liquor. It might

have appeared to an outsider that Beverly was providing too much of the entertainment, and she was. But she knew how grateful we were to her for it.

But in spite of the relief afforded by Beverly and her unknowingly generous mother, our financial condition was not improving. Times were still hard and getting harder. The sick little weekly paycheck from C.B.S. was the biggest event in our lives each week. Although most of it went to repay loans we had made the preceding week, there was sometimes enough left to buy several good meals for the week ahead. When that was gone, we were forced to rely on the one or two generous friends who had stuck by us, and good old Beverly.

It must have been an act of God that my mother decided to pay me a visit from the East at this time. I, of course, invited her to stay with us in our modest quarters. Her arrival was like a ray of heavenly sunlight. Immediately upon noting the nudity of our larder, she headed for the local supermarket, where she bought everything in sight. I feared the refrigerator and the cupboards would not be able to stand the weight, or the shock. Like any conscientious housewife, she set straight to the task of cleaning our untidy apartment and saw to it that there was a most sumptuous meal on the bar every night. Never in my life had I looked to my mother with such reverent awe and honest gratitude.

My mother is an extremely young and attractive woman, an asset she values highly and guards cautiously, and it appears to most people impossible that she could be the mother of so old a son. Although she is not a profound thinker or a well-educated woman, she is intelligent and understanding and, at least in my eyes, often surprisingly aware of what goes on around her. She has a warm and easy manner and likes to be happy, a trait that endears her very quickly to my friends.

Her thoughts are rarely on a serious level, since, more than anything in the world, she loves levity.

As soon as she arrived, she put Jimmy at ease, dispelling any trepidation he might have had about being cursed with his roommate's little gray-haired old mother for several weeks. At first, it appeared that Jimmy liked her, but it became clear after a few days that she was making him uncomfortable. He was always embarrassed when people did things for him, especially things he had not expected. Her generosity and kindness unnerved him. He disliked the feeling of obligation that goes with the acceptance of a favor. He knew that he was in no position to repay her with tokens of appreciation. Unfortunately, he hadn't matured enough to realize that her payment came in the form of seeing him well-fed, clean, and happy.

One rainy day Mother decided to stay in, clean the apartment, and fix a fine dinner for that evening. Jimmy, too, planned to remain in the apartment for the whole day. I went off to work, thinking that I would return to a wonderful dinner and a happy atmosphere, but returned, instead, that evening to find Mother in tears.

"He spent the whole day working on that *thing*" she wept, pointing to the mobile on which Jimmy was working sullenly, in a deep state of concentration.

"He wouldn't even tell me what the crazy thing is," she sobbed. "It was like being locked up with a dead man. I don't know what I've done to him, but it couldn't have been as bad as all that. It would be different if he'd say something, but he just grunts at me."

I had neglected to warn her about his moods, and she was in no condition to understand then. I smoothed things over as best I could, and Mother dried her tears and put her beautiful dinner, wrought in her hours of torment, on the bar.

Jimmy gave no sign of feeling remiss, nor did he apologize. Instead, he slumped in his chair and shoveled her carefully prepared meal into his mouth with boorish abandon.

During the remainder of her visit, Mother artfully avoided staying at home alone with Jimmy.

The day she left we drove her to the station. Jimmy disappeared for a few minutes, while she was checking her luggage. When he returned, he presented her with a box of candy for Mother's Day which he had bought with his last dollar. Included with the gift was a photograph of himself which she find admired. He had signed the picture, *To my second mother—Love, Jimmy*. Knowing that Jimmy's mother had died when he was nine, she was deeply touched, although somewhat confused by his sudden switch in attitude. At that time neither she nor I knew that she was to be the first in a series of second mothers for Jimmy.

After Mother left, Jimmy decided that he had grown pleasingly accustomed to the little luxuries in life, like food, and wanted to do something to perpetuate the habits we had formed, like eating. So, after much persuasion, I was able to persuade my boss at C.B.S. to hire Jimmy as a part-time usher.

Although Jimmy had been an athletic instructor at a military academy near Los Angeles during the summer before he entered U.C.L.A., and said he had enjoyed it, he found it impossible to conform to the regimentation of an usher's life. He openly objected to wearing the uniform, or "monkey suit," as he called it, and consistently refused to take the directives of the head ushers with appropriate seriousness. As a result, unprecedented as it was at C.B.S., he was released after one Abort week, during which he had managed to provoke the wrath of every one of his superiors.

"About your friend Dean," they would sneeringly chide me, "let me tell you..."

But I turned them off, smiling blandly and agreeing with everything I didn't hear them say. Having committed the unpardonable sin of introducing the corruptive influence of James Dean into the well-organized patterns of the C.B.S. machine, I was forced to remain constantly on guard, lest I make another unforgivable mistake and get bounced myself. We needed the money too desperately to allow that to happen. Jimmy, meanwhile, accepted his dubious notoriety with devilish glee and gracefully lapsed into the status of being unemployed.

It was a hot night in July. Jimmy was driving the car, and Beverly and I were in the front seat.

"Bill, there's something we have to tell you," Beverly began cautiously, never turning to look at me. "It's Jimmy and me, now. I mean, we're in love."

There was a long pause, during which I imagined I was supposed to react. I could think of nothing to say. I wasn't shocked or hurt by the announcement, since I had not become emotionally involved with Beverly. I seriously doubted "love" would have been the word Jimmy would have chosen had he elected to broach the subject. I knew him better than that. But he made no effort to correct her. He just continued to drive the car. I couldn't find the right words to rescue Beverly from her uncomfortable position, so I sat very still and remained very quiet.

"Well, you know how much you've been working lately," she went on. "Always having Jimmy pick me up and spend so much time with me, while I was waiting for you to get off. I mean, I guess it was seeing so much of each other, always being together like that, that did it."

Like a true comedienne, playing her first real dramatic scene, she was overacting. I wanted to stop her by smiling, or admitting that I had seen this coming, but I was deriving some odd sadistic pleasure from watching her struggle with the perplexing problem of letting me down gently. My

silence only succeeded in increasing the melodramatics of her plea for understanding and forgiveness.

"We tried not to let it happen," she explained with all the sincerity at her command. "But there was nothing we could do. These things just happen."

Beverly was only eighteen at the time and had seen a lot of movies.

"Please try to understand. Jimmy was afraid of losing your friendship over this. I wouldn't want that to happen. I want us all to go right on being good friends.

This had to stop somewhere.

"I understand, Beverly," I muttered bravely. "Things will be what things will be."

I assumed that Jimmy would know from the facetiousness of my delivery that I was trying to make light of the situation, letting them both know that I was not hurt. But he did not respond. He merely drove on in respectful silence, perpetuating the unnecessarily mournful mood.

I thought of laughing lightly and telling them that it was perfectly all right with me, that perhaps my ego was a bit wounded, but that I understood and certainly didn't intend to let anything so relatively unimportant interfere with our friendships. But I was stopped by the fear of offending Beverly's feminine pride. No woman wants to know that the man she has just thrown over in preference for another is relatively unaffected by the blow. So, I let the thought fade from my mind, and the three of us fell into a deep, uncomfortable silence as we drove on toward home.

I could easily see the logic in what had happened. It was true that I had arranged for Jimmy to pick up Beverly whenever I had to work overtime. It seemed natural, since I was paying for lift gas and since he was always willing, having little else to occupy his early evening hours. They had a great deal more in common than Beverly and I had. They were both extremely interested in golf, swimming, and sports in general. They had taken to going to miniature

golf courses and had, at one of the amusement centers, become involved in learning archery. Although I was sure that Jimmy had little or no deep romantic Interest in the girl, I realized that he had found in her an agreeable companion with a more-than-average means of providing me of the entertainment herself.

We dropped Beverly at her home and continued to drive on to the Penthouse in silence. It wasn't until we were about to go to sleep that night that Jimmy finally spoke out.

Look, Bill, if this thing means that much to you, I'll just forget it," he offered guiltily.

As lightly and as sincerely as possible, I assured him, "Jimmy, it really doesn't matter to me. Honestly. If it did, I'd say so. Don't worry about it. You knew perfectly well Bev and I weren't serious. It's okay—honest. So just forget about it."

He seemed to accept my honest explanation and went off to sleep, guiltless.

Somehow the guilt feeling he had been suffering was transferred to me, and I lay awake for hours brooding over the disturbing truth. Now that Beverly was no longer directly my responsibility, I could admit openly and frankly to myself that I had been unfair where she was concerned. In all these weeks of knowing her, dating her, I had never stopped to analyze my role in the relationship. I realized I had played a very low role with her, the role of a hypocrite and an opportunist. For the first time in my life, I knew what it was to dislike myself. For several hours I tossed and struggled with my thoughts and finally escaped into a restless sleep.

The following morning we met Beverly and drove over to Van Nuys, in the San Fernando Valley, where Jimmy had to make an appearance in court. Several months before, he had been given a speeding ticket when he was returning his father's car, which he had borrowed to move his possessions into the Penthouse. He had never taken care of

the ticket, and consequently the original fine of \$10 had soared with each letter of warning from the police department, until it had, at last, reached the terrifying sum of \$25. The final notice had warned him that a warrant for his arrest would be issued if he did not appear in court within ten days. This had impressed him. He asked Beverly and me to join him for moral support.

I had hoped that the maudlin mood of the preceding evening would have disappeared and that we would all be at ease again, but my hopes were crushed. Beverly brought with her a less intense but still effective version of the same gloom-ridden atmosphere. All the way over to the courthouse, the ineffective attempts at inane levity and small talk became more and more discomforting.

Patiently, nervously, we waited through the juryless trials of several traffic offenders, and a Peeping Tom. The judge, I noted, it was not inclined to be lenient. I feared for Jimmy's pocketbook and our next rent payment.

When it came to Jimmy's turn, the judge asked if there was anything he wanted to say in his defense, since he had no lawyer. Jimmy rose, assuming a most humble air, and approached the bench.

"Your Honor," he began softly, but convincingly, "I know I have done the wrong thing by not taking care of this ticket before now. But I was afraid."

"Afraid?" the judge asked.

"Yes, sir. You see, I'm a student at U.C.L.A. I've been having a rough time of it. I mean, with money. I don't have much, and what I have goes mostly for food and books. I know twenty-five dollars doesn't sound like much to you, Your Honor, but to me it could mean food for a whole month, or books for a whole semester."

"I see," acknowledged the judge. "But you were speeding, exceeding the thirty-five-mile speed limit by ten miles. You broke the law. There is no excuse for that, is there?"

"No, sir, there isn't," Jimmy admitted.

It was obvious he had lost the case. I was already planning where we could move from the Penthouse.

"I know I never should have done it," he went on. "And I wouldn't have, if..."=

The judge leaned forward. "You'll have to speak up, son. I can't hear you."

"I said I never would have done it, if I hadn't promised my father I'd return his car before a certain time. He let me borrow the car so I could go to an interview for a part-time job I needed. I guess I just didn't want to let my ..."

I was sure he was going to say "...poor old..."

". . . my father down." He lowered his eyes and hung his head in remorseful shame.

"Five dollars!" announced the judge with a clack of his gavel. "Pay the bailiff. Next case."

A brilliant performance! As Jimmy turned to pay the bailiff, he passed a wink in our direction. Unable to hold ourselves, Beverly and I rushed into the courthouse corridor and exploded with laughter.

The humor of the incident succeeded in breaking the ice that had frozen the three of us for the past twenty-four hours. We drove home, mimicking Jimmy's beautiful performance, very much in harmony once again. I was relieved—at least, for the while.

In spite of the fact that Jimmy had saved twenty dollars in the court's decision, his financial condition was no better. If he had had to meet the full fine, he would have had to go to jail, or borrow the money from Beverly. Because of a few extravagances, my money, too, was at a particularly low point. We were no better off than we had been and, indeed, were \$5 worse off.

When *Hill Number One* was released back around Easter, the reviews of Jimmy's acting had been filled with praise. His agent had asked several producers to watch the film and they had been duly impressed, but as is so often the case, that was as far as it had gone. Jimmy had hoped for

more than praise and he was terribly disappointed when the jobs didn't start rolling in.

Ironically, the only concrete result of the film was the formation of a fan club by a group of girls from Immaculate Heart High School in Los Angeles. The girls had been required to watch the film and had discovered a new movie idol in John the Baptist. Through his agent, they got in touch with Jimmy and asked him to attend a party in his honor that they were giving at the home of one of their members.

The affair was made very uncomfortable by the girls, who insisted upon staring at Jimmy and giggling among themselves, but Jimmy and I found much amusement and good fun as the evening wore on. Most of the girls were between fourteen and eighteen and were attractive. Jimmy took full advantage of the situation by putting on a real performance for them, playing the role of the star to the hilt. They fell in the wake of his charm and masculinity. With appropriate adoration they clung to him, and in a magnificent gesture of generosity, Jimmy turned over to me whatever he was unable to handle himself.

It was after we returned from a fan club meeting one evening that the first reference in days was made to my broken heart. We were discussing the problem of getting money on which to eat until my next paycheck came.

"I guess you'll just have to borrow some," Jimmy snapped at me abruptly.

"Let's say you borrow some this time," I retorted.

I had been accustomed to doing most of the borrowing and felt, righteously, that Jimmy should take on that responsibility more often. He had borrowed from time to time, but he had not so nearly depleted his sources for loans as I had. I was losing friends by the gross.

"What's eating you?" he inquired defensively. "You don't have to worry about the money I owe you. You'll get it. Every penny."

"I didn't even mention that," I said. "I just thought it would be nice, for a change, if you'd put the touch on one of your friends."

"I know what's eating you," he snarled. "You're still mad because of Beverly. That's it, isn't it?"

"Oh, now, wait a minute!" I moaned. "You must be joking!"

He wasn't. I refused to carry on the discussion any further and left for work. Although I hadn't suspected it, it was evident to me that he hadn't rid himself of the guilt of having stolen his best friend's girl. Actually, he had allowed the guilt to grow, like a malignant thing, until it had turned to animosity.

Among the teen-age Hollywood set, Beverly Wills's yearly birthday parties were considered a major social event. Each August the cream of Hollywood's young social set looked forward to attending the extravagant anniversary party planned for Beverly by her mother. This year promised to be even more interesting than the years before. The guest list included such up-and-coming youngsters as Debbie Reynolds, who had just wowed them with her interpretation of Helen Kane in M-G-M's *Three Little Words*, and Lugene Saunders, who was television's new Corliss Archer. Joan Davis was busily making preparations for the fete, but this time Beverly, too, had her finger in the pie. It promised to be a most fashionable function.

Through their contacts at the archery range, Beverly and Jimmy had met and befriended the nation's archery champion. They had persuaded him to give an archery exhibition at the birthday party, which they hoped would be their answer to the legend of William Tell.

I arrived at the party late because of work, but got there in time for the exhibition. Everyone settled down on the front lawn before the pool to watch the *piece de resistance* of the day. A chair was placed in a strategic spot, from which Joan looked on, somewhat as the grand monarchs of

old looked on while being royally entertained after great banquets.

The exhibition got under way and was received with appropriate applause. After convincing us that he was a master archer, the champion coaxed Joan into participating in the show. Utilizing her inherent talent for classic comedy, Joan brought roars of laughter by playing the coward, but finally agreed to the proposal. Nervously, for effect as well as good reason, she stood before a tree, holding a balloon at arm's length. The champion demonstrated his showmanship to perfection by allowing the first two arrows to stray far from their target, lodging themselves in the tree far above or below the balloon, conveying the impression that the next shot might possibly land directly between brave Miss Davis's eyes. With the third arrow, however, he popped the balloon, bringing a cheer from the crowd and a feigned slapstick faint from the comedienne.

Then, as a superlative thrill, Jimmy announced that he would allow the archer to shoot the proverbial apple off his head. He whipped out an apple, and the confident archer took careful aim. But, not to be outdone or upstaged, Joan jumped quickly into the scene, protesting that this was carrying good fun too far. She insisted that they not attempt the feat, since the danger involved was too great. The archer lowered his bow, and Jimmy, squelched, glared venomously over the rim of his glasses at the theatrically superior Miss Davis.

I was shocked at the resentment that filled me when she stopped the game. Somewhere within me I felt the sadistic desire to have seen the arrow go amiss. Although it was not an honest desire, I allowed my mind to toy with it for a while. In that moment I disliked Joan Davis very much.

During the preceding week, Jimmy had persisted in his defensive attitude toward me, riding me at every chance, being as nasty and vitriolic as he could be, generally making my life miserable. For harmony's sake, I had constantly

been forced to compromise my natural desire to lash out at him, to strike back.

But here, without lifting a finger, there might have been slight¹ revenge. If Joan had allowed the daring exhibition to continue, there was a chance that the arrow might have missed, nicking his shoulder, or ear, perhaps throwing him into an open, public display of panic and fear. How I would have enjoyed that, the evil in me insisted.

Although the party was a glowing success for Beverly and a happy triumph for Joan, it had served to substantiate the rumors I had heard about Joan and Jimmy. I had learned that Joan was becoming increasingly irritated with Jimmy's actions. Several times on the golf course he had succeeded in unnerving her by making corrective suggestions. If there was one thing on which Joan prided herself, it was her golf game, and corrections from a non-professional upstart she definitely did not appreciate. He had further incurred her disfavor by beating her at her own game. That was more than effrontery; it was an insult. There had been sharp words, so I was told, and occasional flare-ups. The incident at the party only helped to demonstrate the antagonism that existed between them. It was becoming apparent that, if Joan had anything to do with it, the relationship between her daughter and Jimmy was to be shortlived.

One night, about a week after the party, I was finding it particularly difficult to tolerate Jimmy's sour disposition and decided to go for a walk. As I strolled along the palisades overlooking the Pacific, I tried to analyze, as objectively as possible, the situation that existed.

It was entirely possible that I was kidding myself. Maybe, subconsciously, I did resent Jimmy for taking Beverly away from me. No, I was convinced it must go deeper than that. Perhaps, basically, I resented him as a competitor. He was certainly better looking than I, a finer actor with a greater potential. He had far more vitality of personality than I,

which made him generally more interesting to people. It seemed logical that I would naturally resent him, or fear him as a threat to my own security.

He had confided in me that he looked at life as though it were simply a sporting event, like basketball. It was a game to be played and won at all costs. I had never shied from normal competition, but rather relished it as a stimulating incentive. But when Jimmy entered into competition for anything, he went at it with a fierceness and determination that made him invincible. Although he could be beaten, his defeat would come at a high price to the contender. No matter how insignificant the contest, you knew he would exert himself to the fullest extent of his abilities in a dauntless effort to achieve a triumph. To me competition had always been fun—though sometimes serious fun—a thing to approach with a challenging attitude. But defeat was tolerable, a thing that was destined to happen at one time or another, and it could be a rewarding experience, just as rewarding as a winning experience, if you were willing to learn from it. But the dead seriousness of Jimmy's approach to competition made the simplest games too unpleasant and the important games too frightening.

As I sat on a guard rail at the edge of the cliffs high above the beach, my thoughts swam out to the infinite blackness that engulfed the distant horizon of the brooding sea, and returned, bringing with them concepts I had never before realized.

Jimmy had a strange and troubled psyche. What was it that gave him this indefatigable drive to attain the heights? What was he looking for so desperately? Perhaps it was love, or completion. When he was only a child, his mother had impressed upon him the importance to her of his success. There had been so much she had wanted for him! While she was alive, there were dancing lessons and instruction in the violin, and she encouraged him when he showed signs of talent or interest. But she had died when

he was nine, leaving him with an uncompleted mission. He was too young to know how to go about fulfilling her wishes, and there was no one who knew how to show him. All through the years to manhood, he had kept and preserved, buried deep within his soul, the obligation to a mother who had left him undefined, incomplete. Was his burning desire to succeed, his need to excel, sparked by the subconscious memory of that mysterious obligation? Perhaps. If, during the years since his mother's death, he had been allowed to forget, to rid himself of her influence, his disturbance might now be less. But, according to our several talks, they had never given him a chance to forget.

His father had sent him off to live with his aunt and uncle on a farm in Indiana shortly after his mother's death. For a long time he had had no father to whom he could turn for relief from the pressures, for understanding and guidance. Then, gradually, his aunt and uncle had become close to him. But by encouraging him, as his mother would have done, when he strove as a child to prove his worth, to succeed and excel, they had only accentuated his belief that to accomplish more and more was not only right for him but also a duty for him. And by the time he graduated from high school, there seemed to be no escape from the haunting obligation.

Then he met a girl, Diane, at Santa Monica City College, and for the first time in his young life, fell deeply in love. Here, at last, was a mother-symbol who could comfort him, praise him, acknowledge his triumphs. But in her extreme youth, although she could not grasp the importance of the role he wanted her to play, she could feel the terrible weight of her responsibility to him, and it frightened her. After a brief romance, she rejected him, throwing him back to the bloodhounds that tracked him through the labyrinth of his subconscious mind.

There was no chance for escape. The distance that had been placed between him and his father during the long

years of separation was too great to span. The farm in Indiana only reminded him more of the dogging responsibility. The comforting succor of love had been denied him. Even his middle name, Byron, given him by that romantic mother in hopes that he would some day rise to the heights attained by his namesake, stalked him each time he affixed his signature in full. Now even I, with my eager assistance, was accelerating his involuntary compulsion. For him there was to be no way out from under the growing tumor that sat heavily upon his subconscious existence.

I left the palisades and walked slowly down a side street. There was no question in my mind; he ^as obviously too much for me to handle. I had neither the strength nor the ambition to cope with a problem so profound and complex. Yet—there was no denying it—I was his friend and felt my own sense of obligation to him. As I walked along, tugging at my thoughts, I suddenly decided I had to talk with someone, anyone. I just had to talk.

Jeanetta Lewis had taken an apartment several blocks from die Penthouse in Santa Monica. I was only a few doors from her place. She would listen.

“Why, the two-timing little weasel!”

Jeanetta had listened, but only until I got to the part about Beverly. Jimmy had neglected to tell me that, aside from his attentions to Beverly, he was continuing to string Jeanetta along. Her unexpected reaction to my unintentional disclosure jarred me and drove the original purpose of my visit from my mind. I had not meant to become involved in another triangle. I had only wanted to share my weighted thoughts and troubled conscience with someone who might have understood and offered a solution. Instead, I had sidetracked myself and was forced to pacify a bitter girl who had just discovered that she had been jilted.

After the initial outburst, she calmed and seemed to be taking the whole matter more in stride. As I was leaving,

she informed me that she was moving the following morning so that she could be in closer to Hollywood, where she worked. She asked me to help her move her things. I agreed and departed, feeling remiss about my unfortunate slip, still confused, and perplexed by my unanswered questions.

In my deathlike sleep I could vaguely hear a banging at my door the next morning. It was Jeanetta. I let her in and went to the bathroom to dress. When I returned, ready to leave on our moving expedition, I found Jeanetta hovering over Jimmy's sleeping form in the next room. She was muttering at him, though not loud enough to wake him, and tearing a piece of paper into shreds. Completing her curses and incantations, she carefully distributed the torn bits of paper on the floor beside his bed.

"What'd you tear up?" I asked when we were outside.

"The picture," she replied with serene satisfaction. She was referring to a photograph of the two of them which had been taken at a fraternity dance. It was Jimmy's favorite.

"Ouch!" I predicted.

"I know," she said with a triumphant smile.

After finishing the exhausting task of carting her bulky belongings from Santa Monica to Hollywood, I allowed Jeanetta to buy my breakfast. I finally woke up over coffee and tried to revert to the discussion I hadn't quite succeeded in bringing up the night before. But Jeanetta's motivations were stronger than mine, and somehow the subject kept shifting to the lowness of Jimmy's character. Outnumbered by her words, I gave in and joined her in an open analysis of the messy situation.

"You know what bothers me most?" I confessed. "It hurt me to think Jimmy would allow himself to do something he thought was hurting me. What he did doesn't bother me as much as the fact that he did it thinking he was wrong."

After listening to the sad story of the abuse I had suffered as a result of Jimmy's guilty conscience, she leaned forward

and suggested, "You know, you're a fool for not moving out."

I had to admit that the thought had entered my mind several times. Not only was the living arrangement becoming insufferable; but also the burden of carrying Jimmy financially, since he had refused to take any other work after he lost the C.B.S. job, was beginning to be too much for me.

"As long as we're up here, why don't we just look around for a cheap little place for you? There's no harm in looking." The potential harm in looking for anything, I soon discovered, lay in the possibility of finding it. After investigating just two apartments, we came across a room that suited my needs and budget perfectly. The fact that it was only a block away from C.B.S. made it all the more attractive. Before I had taken the time to think out the ramifications of such a move, I had placed a small deposit on the place and was putting in a call to the landlady of the Penthouse.

As we drove out Sunset Boulevard toward Santa Monica to pack and move my things, I could not help but feel disturbed by the reaction I had received from the landlady over the phone. She had been greatly upset to think that I was moving out on such short notice, leaving the full responsibility for the rent in Jimmy's incapable hands. She had always been kind to me, and I knew I had not been fair to her in this action. This and thoughts of Jimmy's reaction to the news occupied my thinking, shutting out the nice neat string of helpful rationalizations that Jeanetta was offering.

As the car slid up to the curb across the street from the Penthouse, we could see Jimmy, prepared to greet us, blocking the walkway. He was standing there, arms folded, glowering at us with a look that far exceeded anger. Obviously the landlady had rushed to him with the news, after my phone call. He had had plenty of time to let his anger grow to the stage of violence.

"You'd better stay in the car," I advised Jeanetta, remembering the tom photograph.

As I went to face my adversary, he removed his glasses and threw them onto the lawn.

"You dirty little snake!" he hissed, and grabbed me by the throat. He was so furious the words stuck on his tongue, rendering him inarticulate. He pulled me within focus and ripped my insides apart with the hatred in his tear-filled eyes.

"If you're going to do it, do it!" I cried out at him.

Jeanetta, who had come running when he grabbed me, was tugging at his sleeve.

"Cut it out," he warned her.

"If you're going to hit somebody, why don't you hit somebody who won't, hit back? That's your speed, isn't it?"

"Get off my back! This doesn't concern you," he spat at her.

"Oh yes it does! I talked him into it," she insisted.

Jimmy loosened his grip on my throat.

"C'mon, Jimmy, hit me!" she needled. "I can't defend myself."

"Just shut up, or I will!"

She tugged harder at his arm. "Oh, you're brave! Big brave man! C'mon, get some real satisfaction. Why don't you—"

He released his hold on me and smashed her across the face with all the violence he had accumulated. She staggered backward.

"Oh, you can do better than that," she insisted, tears flooding her eyes. "C'mon, Jimmy, hit me again, why don't you?"

Before I could grab his arms, he had smashed her twice more across the mouth, this time drawing blood. I steadied him, and the sight of the blood drained him of resistance.

Somehow I managed to get them both upstairs into the Penthouse. Jeanetta became sick and went into the

bathroom, where she made terrible retching sounds. Jimmy fell apart, apologizing profusely for his animal behavior. I was shaker and ignored him, packing my clothes quickly. He turned his attention to Jeanetta, whose performance had completely unstrung him, and attentively offered her handkerchiefs, aspirin anything that would help stop the bleeding and the sickness. He ran downstairs to the landlady to borrow a tea bag so that he could make her some hot tea.

"I'm not really sick. Let him squirm a little," she confided when he was gone.

"I think we've had enough. Maybe you'd better lay off."

"No," she laughed. "I'm enjoying this."

Jimmy returned with the tea and put some water on to boil, all the time apologizing to Jeanetta, comforting her, and explaining himself to me. The more he apologized, the more I hated myself. I couldn't even talk. All I could think of was getting out of that place as fast as possible. Jeanetta continued the performance, obviously pleased with the effect of her acting.

I gathered my things and moved them down to the car. On the last trip I picked up the remaining suitcase and told Jeanetta I was ready to go. Jimmy began to cry. Whoever said revenge was sweet had evidently never tasted it.

"So long, Bill," he said, offering his hand for me to shake.

For a long moment I looked at his hand. Then, with a helpless shrug, I shook my head and left.

We had driven about a mile toward town when I finally spoke to Jeanetta. "Turn around and go back."

She was shocked.

"I said, turn around and go back!" I repeated.

She made a U turn.

"You aren't going back in there and undo all this, are you?" she said.

"I think we've done something terrible," I answered.

For almost an hour we sat in the car across the street from the Penthouse, watching the windows for signs of movement. I knew that if I went back up there, it would mean I'd changed my mind. I wasn't sure, so I just sat there and waited. Finally, when we saw him through one of the windows, we drove off.

Like that I had gained a friend, and like this, I had lost one. I felt empty. What had all this been for? I didn't know. I only knew I felt empty, alone, and sorry. What was right and what was wrong? What was worthwhile and what was insignificant? I was twenty years old, but a very lost, very lonely boy. How I needed someone to tell me!

There was nothing to fill out my hours then, but work. There were no more wonderful reading sessions by candlelight, no more long, low, deep discussions of things that would always remain a mystery, no more unexpected adventures. I dropped from the Whitmore class to avoid having to face Jimmy. I saw as little of Jeanetta as possible. My dreary little room was no comfort, so I began spending every possible minute at C.B.S., working, observing, learning. Perhaps the self-inflicted loneliness and excessive work would help to compensate for the guilt.

Beverly saved the day for Jimmy. She lent him enough money to meet the rent payment, at least for the next month. He set himself to the task of finding a part-time job. Within a few days after I moved out, he was well settled and on the road to recovery.

While he was employed by C.B.S., Jimmy had met another usher named Ted Avery. Ted had since started working in the parking lot adjoining the C.B.S. studios, and, in his spare time, was snagging a few bit parts in occasional movies. Jimmy began pursuing Ted in an effort to get him to introduce him to the methods he used in getting his bits. The two of them could be seen around C.B.S. frequently, cutting up and putting on extraordinary exhibitions in the cowpoke outfits they took to wearing.

It was through Ted that Jimmy finally got a job as a parking-lot attendant on the same lot. The owner was a very understanding man who would allow the boys to take off whenever it was necessary to go out on an interview. The arrangement seemed ideal for Jimmy. The C.B.S. producers and directory who parked in the lot were high tippers, bringing his salary near to that of a full-time job. The hours were good, the work was easy, and there was a chance that one of those directors might get to know him well enough to take a chance on hiring him.

After the first month, he moved in with Ted, whose wife had gone out of town for a while, and shared his little apartment in Hollywood. Ted, being an excellent horseman, began teaching Jimmy how to ride and rope. Jimmy felt that the skills would increase his chances of being hired for Western films, which were Ted's mainstay. It was after the riding sessions that they would appear in their cowpoke attire and haunt the corridors of C.B.S., destroying the dignity of the atmosphere completely.

Because of Joan's disapproval of Jimmy, Beverly and Jimmy had to see each other outside of her home. They began going dancing at Paradise Cove, a trailer camp on the ocean near Malibu where Beverly's father maintained a trailer. The Cove was inhabited by urbanites who sought in it a means of escaping from city life on week ends.

Beverly and Jimmy regularly attended the dances held in the main pavilion. Beverly, being an excellent dancer, enjoyed dancing with anyone who could keep up with her. Jimmy, unfortunately, was not as versatile as she, and she found it desirable to dance with other, more capable, young men.

On the occasion of one such dance, her attentions to the other men annoyed Jimmy to the limit of his endurance. He sat brooding in a corner while she danced away the evening with one boy after another. When he could contain himself no longer, he exploded.

“Go on!” he roared. “Dance your fool head off!” and stormed out of the dance hall and out of Beverly’s romantic life.

After several weeks, Jimmy and I stopped avoiding one another. Ted Avery’s wife had returned, and Jimmy found refuge with another newly acquired friend, Rogers Brackett, who was a successful young radio director at C.B.S. Rogers’ Sunset Plaza apartment was a great improvement over Ted’s modest Hollywood quarters. There was much new excitement and glamor in Jimmy’s current life, and he wanted to tell someone about it. So, in a desire to express his happiness and a need to impress me with his good fortune, he gradually allowed the barrier that had been built between us to fall.

Rogers, as a friend, was an important find for Jimmy. He not only occupied a position of authority in the radio business, an obvious advantage to Jimmy’s career, but was also Jimmy’s intellectual superior by far and, through his sincere interest in Jimmy, was doing all he could to help him grow and learn the things he sought so earnestly to know. Jimmy showed his gratitude by absorbing everything Rogers taught him.

Often Jimmy would fall upon me with discussions of subjects he had added to his ever-broadening range of interests. It was no longer sufficient for him merely to be acquainted with the works of artists like Matisse and Klee, writers like Colette, geniuses like Cocteau; now he had to understand the significance of the literary and intellectual movements that influenced their thinking. With amazing speed he was absorbing an understanding of art, literature, music, and the professional world around him. Although, as he talked, I knew he was bluffing his way through some of it, I was awed by the amazing amount he had learned and the ease and confidence with which he tossed it off. At times it was disconcerting for me to realize that he had become articulate on subjects about which I knew little or nothing.

He wasted no time in impressing me with his new social contacts as well, falling prey to the most sickening of all Hollywood diseases: name dropping.

"Had the greatest week end," he would announce. "Went down to the bullfights in Tijuana with Davey Wayne and his wife. Left Saturday and stayed over in Laguna until Sunday, then went on down. Davey's the greatest! A real wit! We were sitting at this table. You know, one of those umbrella tables, only this one didn't have the umbrella in the hole. So, Davey took his hand, see, and..."

Or, "I was sitting at the pool yesterday and Barbara Payton came out in a Bikini. This kid's got more body than a Renaissance maiden. So, after a while, I went and got my sketch pad..."

Or, "Finished *Moulin Rouge* last night. The end! You've got to read it. It's the novel about Lautrec's life. Rogers flipped over it, too. So, we picked up the phone and called La Mure, the guy who wrote it. You know, just to tell him how we flipped over it. We're going to meet him and..

Granted, it was all very interesting, but I couldn't help wondering not only if it was all true, but if it was all as exciting as he made out. I knew he had really become enthusiastic over bullfighting, to the point of becoming an *aficionado*, but when he came back from a week end in Mexicali, where he had gone to see the fights, and informed me that he had fought a two-year-old on a farm outside Mexicali and that the whole thing had been set up by movie director-bullfighter Bud Boettiger, I began to wonder where the truth ended and fantasy started.

But aside from the name-dropping habit, oddly enough most of his newly found sophistication was becoming to him. Although a worldly way of thinking was completely new to him, he took it in his stride, even appearing blasé and unimpressed with all he was learning and all he was experiencing. Rogers had taught him not only to participate in a society of sophisticates, but also to remain intellectually

aloof and objective, so as to be able to scrutinize, with a knowing eye, the difference between the giddy pseudo-intellectuals and the truly creative minds around him. He was playing a very difficult role: at one time the critic-spectator and also the performer in a very complex, very bad, but very significant play. And he was playing it well.

"You know," he finally admitted one day, "it gets sickening. The other day we were sitting at the pool, and I made a bet with Rogers that the names of La Rue or the Mocambo would be dropped at least fifteen times within the next hour. We kept count, and I won. What a pile of hogwash!"

Although he was prospering from the education he was getting in his new environment, it was obvious the shallowness and monotony of the Strip Set were beginning to bore him. He had spent too much time sitting around the pool, listening to the same inane conversations, hearing the same catty chatter about the same insipid people, and it was beginning to get on his nerves. At first, it had been fascinating to be an insider during the Barbara Payton-Tom Neal-Franchot Tone scandal, catching the inside dirt on the latest developments—things the public would never know—sketching the voluptuous Payton as she lay in her Bikini at poolside, and later making the snide, clever remarks that would titillate the party at the Mocambo. But after a while the whole thing became a petty affair, and the dialogue seemed repetitious. For a while it was even great fun knowing who was acting scandalously with whom, but he was discovering that once you knew, you didn't much care. As a matter of fact, he was coming to the conclusion that he didn't much care about any of their nonsense. There were things to be done, much more important things, and this was only a waste of time.

"I'm beginning to understand Caligula," he confided to me over dinner at the Tam-O-Shanter, a little restaurant near Griffith Park where he felt comfortable and didn't have to keep up his pretentious guard. "You know, he was the mad

Roman emperor. He thought he was a god. To satisfy a whim, he'd command a man to do something ridiculous, degrading, something that would remove his dignity and completely humiliate him. If the man did his bidding, Caligula would have his head cut off in disgust, realizing in his madness that any man who would allow himself to be so humiliated was not worthy of life. If the man refused to degrade himself, dared to oppose his command, he would cut off his head as punishment. But he'd respect that man.

"That's how these people are. With all their power and wealth, they've got it in their heads that they're gods. This town's full of them. They get these poor young kids, saps like me, and make them perform. You know—run around town, like court jesters, charming the pants off of important people. Sure, the poor jerks put on a good show. Why shouldn't they? They think that by turning a few somersaults they'll put themselves into some monster's good graces. What most of them don't know is that all they get in the end is a swift boot right out the door.

"I guess, in a way, you can't blame them. Maybe once in a while, one won't get the brush. Maybe once in a while, the show'll pay off, and they'll get a screen test or an audition. But, out of the handful who are lucky, how many have the stuff to make their big break pay off? Ha! One way or the other, most of them get jobbed anyway.

"I did a little dancing myself. I was dumb. I thought it might pay off. But it doesn't take long to find out it won't. I'm not performing for any of them. Not any more. And if I can't make it on my talent, I don't want to make it at all. I know, maybe I'll never work in this crummy town, but at least I'll preserve some dignity. If nothing else, the slobs'll respect me—even if I do get the boot."

If, in reality, he was sticking to his decision to stop dancing for his supper, there didn't seem to be any signs of his getting the boot. On the contrary, he was doing more work than he had done to date. Through his good friend, Rogers,

he was cast in a few bit parts on C.B.S. radio shows, like *Alias Jane Doe*, which starred Lurene Tuttle, and *Stars Over Hollywood*. Ted Avery and other friends had led him to the movie lots and shown him how to get occasional bit parts in films. Before I knew it, he had completed a bit in the Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis comedy *Sailor Beware* at Paramount, a one-line bit in *Fixed Bayonets* with Richard Basehart at 20th Century Fox, and even a dancing bit in a Universal-International musical with Rock Hudson and Piper Laurie, *Somebody Stole My Gal* Al- thought they were obviously not starring roles, and although the work had been obtained through the help of close personal friends, the very fact that he got the jobs indicated that he most certainly had not been ostracized by Hollywood. Nor, on the other hand, did it indicate that he was still playing court jester. It only pointed out that he was getting an occasional bit part, a very circuitous route to what was, in his estimation, the questionable glory of stardom.

"I can't stomach this dung hole any more," he concluded after a late session at Barney's Beanery one night. "I've had it. A guy could go on knocking his brains out, getting nothing but bit parts for years. There's got to be more.

"Rogers took off for Chicago. Before he left, he told me I should get back to New York if I want to accomplish anything. Whitmore said the same thing. I asked around. You know, Ralph Levy—directs the Benny show and Bums and Allen—he gave me the names of some people to look up. One guy by the name of Jim Sheldon who's a director on the Montgomery show back there. I got a few other contacts, too. I don't know, maybe I should go. You've been there. I mean, what do you think?"

Just before starting college I had gone to New York and, in my youthful exuberance, had fallen in love with the magic of the place. But since that time the memory of it had faded,

and New York had become a mysterious place where the struggle for survival was the toughest.

“The only way you’ll find out is by going.” I was talking to myself, but Jimmy overheard.

Several nights later, I dragged myself up the stairs of the apartment-hotel where I had been living and let myself into the drab little room. On the floor there was a phone message: “Mr. Dean called. Gone to New York.” I flopped on the sagging old bed, the crumpled message clenched in my fist.

For a long time I lay there, staring at the cracked ceiling and listening to the vicious screams of encouragement that were coming from the blood-hungry spectators at the wrestling matches in the American Legion Stadium nearby:

“Kill him! Kill him! Break his neck!”

Sometimes, if I was there earlier in the evening, I could hear them sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” before the fights began, but not tonight.

I closed my eyes and thought of Jimmy way off in New York.

“Break him in half! Kill him!” came the hate-filled cries from the arena below.

And just before I escaped into the protective blanket of sleep, I thought I heard myself mumble, “Poor Jimmy.”

II

“Time and space, succession and extension, are merely accidental conditions of thought, the imagination can transcend them and move in a free sphere of ideal existences.”

Oscar Wilde—*De Profundis*

=It was =10 o'clock on a muggy morning in May when I stopped before an old office building somewhere in the West Twenties. Doubtful, I checked the address on the limp piece of paper in my hand. This was the place, according to my information. Inside, I started to climb the sloping wooden stairs. With each succeeding flight I found the old stairway less and less secure. I stopped on the fourth-floor landing to blot the sweat from my face and to rest. I took the last flight of stairs cautiously, hoping they would hold out at least another few minutes. Exhausted, I knocked on the door of the only apartment on the fifth floor and, slumping against the wall, waited for an answer. My body was heavy and my clothes clung to it adhesively. I was unaccustomed to fifth-floor walk-ups and New York humidity.

The door opened, and two sleepy red eyes blinked at me from the darkness within.

“Uh?” questioned the weary little man in briefs.

“Hi, Jimmy!” I shouted in a manner to indicate I was happy to see him again.

“Oh. C'mon in,” he responded unenthusiastically.

The apartment was cool, almost cold, in sharp contrast to the heat outside. Heavy drapes had been pulled across the studio window, and the only sound was the comforting hum of an air-conditioner.

“Be right with you,” Jimmy mumbled as he groped around in the semi-darkness, gathering clothes that had been strewn from one end of the living room to the other only a

few hours before. He stumbled toward the bathroom and disappeared.

"I thought you'd be ready," I called after him. "That's why I phoned first."

Characteristically, he had gone back to sleep after instructing me to come over to his apartment right away.

"Yeah," was his explanation.

I drew the drapes open and looked around the apartment. It was surprising what you would find at the top of a rickety old stairway in New York. Here, sitting inconspicuously atop a dilapidated commercial building of some sort, was a spacious studio apartment, neatly furnished and designed for comfortable mid-town living. Here, in the least likely spot, were all the luxuries a man could want: a bed, some books, a coffee pot, a television set, and a view of the buildings across the street. Yet, in spite of the improvised nature of many Manhattan dwellings, there was a certain desirable atmosphere about them, a feeling of seclusion, a sense of being, and an awesome reminder of man's ingenuity. It always seemed to me a lesson in how to exist most cleverly against the greatest odds. And to have accomplished this feat was an achievement worthy of merit and praise. After all, it was comparatively easy to exist comfortably in the suburbs, but a man had to have a lot of mettle, or money, to scrape out an adequate existence in the city.

"Coffee," Jimmy advised, when he had thrown on some old clothes.

"It's simple enough," Jimmy explained to me, once we were settled over breakfast in an air-cooled restaurant off Times Square. "I stopped off in Chicago on my way here. Saw a few shows, met some people. David Swift and Maggie McNamara—they're great, you know. Then I stopped off at the farm to see Marcus and Mom."

Our waiter flung the food on the table with obvious contempt for the low types he was forced to serve.

"When I got here," Jimmy went on with his mouth full, "I looked up this guy Jim Sheldon. He called a few people for me. Got me set up with Jane Deacy at the Louis Shurr office—good agency. Did a couple of TV bits: *-Men in Action, The Web. Studio One*. You know, stuff like that. Got a lead on *Theater Guild of the Air* on radio. Isn't much, but it's a good start."

He removed his two front teeth, the upper bridge he had been forced to wear since he lost two teeth in an accident in high school, and began to clean them with a paper napkin.

"You know, thith town'th the end," he lisped, grinning at me like a toothless old man. "They've got everything in the world here. I mean, if you let thingth happen, there'th no telling where you can go."

He slipped the bridge back into place and rinsed his mouth with coffee. "They don't fuss with the nonsense here, like they do out there. Either you've got it or you haven't. It's talent that counts here. Keeps you on your toes all the time. You've got to stay with it, or you get lost. I like it.

"I guess I was lucky," he continued. "Rogers came back here to work. I've been staying with him for the time. He's introduced me to lots of people here, sort of showing me the ropes. Everything's working out just great.

"Okay, now, give," he said pointedly. "What are you doing here?"

I explained that everything had gone wrong in Hollywood since he left. Shortly after my promotion at C.B.S., they had lowered the axe, cutting budgets in every direction, dropping network television shows by the dozen, and whittling production staffs to a minimum. My head had been one of the first to roll.

"I sort of got all involved with Beverly again. Even got engaged," I said, squirming in my seat.

"You're a crafty one," he chuckled demoniacally.

"I couldn't find another job anywhere," I went on evasively. "The thing with Bev got pretty complicated and finally came to a messy end. So, I—"

"C'mon. C'mon," he interrupted. "What happened? She came back here with Joan. You know, when Joan did one of those Big Shows with Bankhead. We went for a hansom ride in the park and she flashed that ring under my nose. Everything sounded rosy then. What happened?"

Unable to avoid the issue, I explained as simply as possible that the same type of complications had set in as had existed when he was going with Beverly. I disagreed with Beverly when she wanted to get married right away, especially since I was out of work. Beverly disagreed with Joan when Joan insisted she stay in college. Everybody had been in disagreement, causing constant confusion. Finally, we had broken off the engagement.

"Some friends of mine from New York just happened to be in town at the time. They suggested that they might be able to get me into an ad agency here, if I wanted to come back to New York. Ever since you left, I had been thinking about it. You know how I've always wanted to get back here. Well, since things were so mixed up around there, I figured it couldn't be worse in New York. So, here I am."

Jimmy chuckled like someone who had just missed a boat to the wrong place. He made a quick phone call and announced, "Let's cut out. We're going to meet Dizzy."

On the way up Broadway to a drugstore, he explained only that Dizzy was a dancer, the daughter of the famous pianist, Frank Sheridan, that she had a great mind, that he liked her, and that I would like her, too.

He was right. I liked her immediately. She walked into the drugstore and I liked her. She was a long, lithe, supple beauty with a pixy humor that came through in everything she said and did. She was warm and friendly, unpretentious, and very broke. She existed on the twenty-some dollars she picked up every week for her work as a part-time

usherette at the Paris motion picture theater near the Hotel Plaza. She wasn't pretty in a conventional sense, but she was right there where you could touch her and know she was real.

With careless ease we strolled through Central Park, laughing and being very free. In the zoo Jimmy and Dizzy began to ' clown, mocking the people who were watching the animals. "Look at the monkeys," cried Dizzy.

"No, look at the people," contradicted Jimmy, mimicking the giggling, grinning, gaping onlookers.

The hour or so in the park eased my worried mind. Arriving unprepared in a new place, I had many plans to make, and concern for my future pressed heavy on my mind. But laughter soothes all strain, and my friends had made me laugh.

"Well, I've got to take off," I announced, refreshed. "Got to find a place to live."

Gracefully Dizzy sprang to a sign pole and swung lightly around it through the air, landing at my feet. "Why don't you two get a place together?" she asked casually.

I turned a quick look on Jimmy, who was staring at me with the expression of a man who has just been offered a water moccasin for a pet.

"What's the matter?" Dizzy inquired after a long moment of silence. "I say something wrong, or do you both usually look like a scene from a wax museum around this time each day?" Jimmy broke first. He began to laugh, first giggling, then roaring, until the tears rolled down his face. The Penthouse incident became vivid in my mind, and the clearer it became, the funnier it seemed. I began to laugh with him. Dizzy was at a total loss, but since she liked to laugh in general, she joined us.

For Jimmy and me, all the tensions and guilts of the year before were poured into that laughter. Dizzy, ignorant of the situation, was a sort of buffer between us, and we could explain away our individual motivations in the Penthouse

incident and excuse our behavior toward one another. We jabbered incoherently, as if to let Dizzy in on the big joke. When we finished, Dizzy understood less than she had at the start, but Jimmy and I knew one very important thing: our friendship had weathered a very serious storm. And, once again, without a word, our ties were strongly re-established.

One of the meanest problems the city presents, as any honest New Yorker will readily admit, is the task of finding an apartment. Somewhere in the labyrinth of masonry and steel which disappears into the clouds over the island of Manhattan there is one apartment, the one the apartment hunter will finally rent. It is his destiny to trudge through the maze, looking, inquiring, begging, inspecting, rejecting, hoping, until, by mere chance, he comes upon that certain niche for which he was predestined. Then, his quest at an end, he can settle down to the awesome challenge of making a home out of his cave in the sky.

This is an occupation for patient, industrious people, or people who can afford to have others attend to the matter for them. Neither Jimmy, Dizzy, nor I filled any of those qualifications. For a while we sat in the park, contemplating the fatiguing project that faced us. Then, without any organized plan of attack, we set off down Sixth Avenue, hoping that someone would rush up to us on the street and offer us the ideal location at a ridiculously low price. By the time we had walked to Forty-fourth Street, we began to doubt that our generous friend would show up.

"I know someone who lives at the Royalton over there," Jimmy said from his perch on the curb. "Let's go over and see what they've got."

As we entered the lobby of the Royalton, we met Roddy McDowall, a contented tenant at the time. Jimmy stopped and chatted with him for a few minutes, discovering that the rents at the Royalton put us in a broom-closet category.

Stepping outside, we came face to face with New York's most famous theatrical hotel, the Algonquin, an inn so steeped in theatrical tradition that one felt obliged to enter its doors in an attitude of reverent respect.

"Forget it," I lamented. "It's probably twice as expensive."

My gaze shifted slightly to the east of the Algonk and fell upon a sign bearing the name of another local tribe, the Iroquois. A less imposing structure than her sister next door, she was, nonetheless, equally as conveniently located, and, lacking the charming and expensive history, would undoubtedly be more reasonable.

A single room with twin beds and bath for ninety dollars a month was, I was assured by Jimmy and Dizzy, a real bargain in mid-town. As I scanned the room with an appraising eye, I could only remember how much larger and more atmospheric the Penthouse had been, and how much cheaper. But the day was short, and the uncomplicated procedure of simply taking what was at hand appealed to me.

"Okay," I agreed. "Let's try it for a month, anyway."

During my first week in New York, Jimmy put me through a regular orientation program. I followed him on his acting rounds, acquainting myself with people and places; I sat with him and talked at length with other young actors and writers in Cromwell's drugstore downstairs in the RCA Building; I haunted the air-conditioned Broadway movie houses with him, seeking relief from the relentless heat that had taken the city; I ate with him at the several cafeterias and restaurants which he frequented for their delicious and delightfully inexpensive food. And by the time the week ended, I was fairly well adjusted to my new surroundings and acquainted with my new mode of existence.

During the course of that first week, one thing became increasingly clear to me: our relationship had made a complete about-face. No longer was I the one with my feet

planted firmly on the ground, or perhaps in the mire of false confidence. No longer was it Jimmy who turned to me for the answers, as it had been in the beginning. Now I was following Jimmy's lead, and I didn't like it.

At first I resisted my new role, busying myself with the search for a job, the investigation of the exciting city. But, from the very first day, it was apparent to me that Jimmy was holding a secret for me, more so than it had ever seemed before, and he was merely waiting until I was ready to accept it. There was that old diabolical twinkle in his eye that told me he knew something I needed to know. No matter how much I tried to ignore it and convince myself that I was not interested, my curiosity mounted with each frustrating day.

He made no overt attempt to force it on me, but simply waited patiently for my stubborn resistance to break. Unlike the Jimmy I had known in Hollywood, the Jimmy who I felt held within him some of the answers, this was a Jimmy who radiated the undeniable truth that he did know some of the answers, if only a choice handful. There was about him an aura of contained excitement, like a child who was guarding a special surprise until just the right moment.

Often I would catch him in the act of waiting. Quickly I would look up from a book I was reading and find him staring at me with his pixy grin. As quickly as I looked up, he would turn away, but when I could catch a glimpse of his face in a window or a mirror, he would be restraining a greedy laugh.

"All right, I give up," I finally declared one night, as we were going to bed. "What the devil is it? You couldn't be more obvious and it's driving me nuts. I know something's happened to you, but I can't figure it out. I get this strange feeling, like I've got cancer and you've got the cure for it."

He had his audience in a sweat of anticipation and he was satisfied. Releasing his enthusiasm, too long contained, he

tried to pour everything out in a long stream of abstractions, which I was forced to interpret.

"I've discovered a whole new world here, a whole new way of thinking," he began.

He rambled on about how it had all begun when he had been introduced into a new group of people. They were all professionals, well established within their respective fields. There was Alec Wilder, the composer who wrote "While We're Young; Bill Envig, a lyricist; David Swift, a television writer; Maggie McNamara, the actress who had just replaced Barbara Bel Geddes in *The Moon Is Blue*; Sarah Churchill, and more. They had all included him within their circle, or accepted him individually, and he was eternally grateful for what they had been giving him.

The most important aspect of his new circle of friends was J that they each thought in a way that was new and exciting to I Jimmy. Their individual definitions of things that were essential in life were directly in accord with Jimmy's secret ideals. 1 The one thing they shared in common was that they had, in- I dependency of one another, found an idealistic basis for existing in this world, a basis for human relationships that was renewing Jimmy's hope for a better life. They were vitally interested in the world in which they lived and constantly sought *to enlighten themselves. They were informed far beyond the people he had known before. And, most important of all, they had accepted him and were sharing the riches of their minds and souls with him.

Beyond that, my mind could grasp no more of all he was saying. In the darkness my thoughts began to spin dizzily with the rush of his words. And soon I was asleep.

During the preceding year, Jimmy had learned the importance of being aware, of being informed, of knowing as much about everything as possible. Although he was intelligent enough to realize that he could never hope to know everything, he was, even so, dedicated enough to

strive for that Utopian state. Consequently, with the same frightening determination I had seen whenever he entered into competition, he attacked the problem of learning, of absorbing all of what there was around him.

He sapped the minds of his friends as a bloodsucker saps the strength of an unsuspecting man. Almost fanatically he approached each person he met, whether prominent or obscure, with the same attitude: I will draw from him all he knows and pass on to the next. Yet his approach was not so clinical that he did not become personally involved, often emotionally involved, in the lives and problems of those he was studying. The initial motivation may have been clinical, but, once the research was under way, Jimmy's humanness would take over, rendering him incapable of remaining totally objective. When he was simply searching for knowledge, even though he might have started because a subject was considered important for him to know, his natural enthusiasm and interest in all aspects of life would often manipulate him so that he would become sincerely, actively involved in learning all there was to learn about that subject.

In spite of the fact that most of his friends and acquaintances knew this about him they never seemed to mind being drained of their resources of wisdom, but rather seemed flattered, as I had been, that he wanted to know what they knew.

In my case, Jimmy had learned from me, long before most of what I had to offer him. Now, possibly through a sense of friendship, or through the great ego-satisfaction that comes to an educator, he extended himself to me, giving me all he was learning. At first it came in small dribs and drabs, but after a while he began to assume that I could understand his vague abstractions, dropping larger and larger hunks of his new found wisdom in my lap.

I was not totally prepared for what he had to offer. All I could gather from his abstract definitions was that there was a broader scope of understanding and communication between people. He seemed to be trying to tell me that there could be, among people, a strong tie, a permanent link of love and compassion, which could only be possible when they would put aside all the extraneous, complex trivialities, the mountain of unnecessary and petty thoughts that now kept them apart. It was, perhaps, the concept of being in harmony with a single unifying power.

All my life I had striven to attain success. I had struggled to achieve many things as quickly and at as early an age as possible. As a result, I had become a busy little boy with many projects at hand at all times. I rushed about from chore to task, never taking time to realize the sublimity of spiritual communication with the world about me. I hadn't had time. There was too much to do.

"You're running so fast, it's all passing you by," he would explain.

Hard as I tried, I could not learn from his brief explanation what he meant me to do to remedy the condition. I would go away and mull over what he had said, then return to him for another word of explanation, hoping that this time he might get through to me.

"People," he would say. "You've got to give and receive."

Again I would struggle through a few days, trying desperately to divine what he meant. And again I would return for more words of wisdom.

"You've got to bounce the ball," he would advise.

Over a period of weeks I developed a nervous reaction to the thoughts he was trying to put into my head. No matter

what I did, no matter how hard I tried to interpret what he was saying, I drew a blank each time. For a moment, I would think I had the answer and go to Jimmy to ask him if that was it. Sadly he would shake his head and sigh and say no more. It became a great frustration, trying to guess the secret, the system he had found that had given him such a strong sense of security, such a definite and positive outlook on life and his art, such an all-encompassing philosophy of this life and the next.

After he had watched me stewing in confusion for several weeks, he walked into the hotel room one night and found me sitting on my bed, staring blankly into space and contemplating all the unknown quantities. Without a word he reached for a little book on the dresser and handed it to me. It was entitled *The Little Prince*, and was written by Antoine de Saint-Exupery. He nodded and left the room.

Drawn by an overwhelming compulsion, I opened the book and entered, for the first time in my life, the most perfect world I have ever known. As the sadly beautiful story of the little child from a distant asteroid unfolded with each succeeding page, I could feel the exultation of awakening to a world of simple truth.

The Little Prince is sweetness, and warmth, and simplicity. He is the symbol of all that is truly important in this world and the others. He is love, kindness, friendship, and understanding. To know him is to accept him as the symbol of perfection in human relationships. To know him is to believe so sincerely in him that he becomes a reality. For is there anything more real, more sacred to each of us than his own private symbol of perfection through beauty and love?

Carefully I read through the tender story, until at the end the Little Prince was taken back to his tiny asteroid in the heavens, there to remain, only to be remembered. I had come to know a simple child and learn with him that one

sees only with the heart, that "what is essential is invisible to the eye." I had been touched deeply by a thing of sensitive beauty. I had held, for a moment, all the love and truth of the universe in my hands. And, as I had held it, so I had let it go, but not to be forgotten.

As I read the last words, I wept, though not in sadness, but in a desperate longing for this little child and the perfection of his soul. I buried my face in the pages of the book and cried, a thing I had not done since my childhood. It is a cleansing tiling, to cry like that.

I was still crying when Jimmy returned and sat down beside me. "I didn't think you'd dig it right off," he said gently. "I didn't."

He explained to me how, at first, he had not known the dell ice to which his friends worshiped the Little Prince. Consequently, he had unwittingly caused Alec Wilder a moment of terrible and shattering excitement. Immediately upon his arrival in New York, Jimmy had placed a call to Alec at the Algonquin. When Alec answered the phone, Jimmy, disguising his voice as that of a small child, announced, "Hello, Mr. Wilder. This is the Little Prince."

If you had come to know and love the Little Prince as ardently as those who cherish him have; if you had learned to miss him, to long for his sweet, gentle words and his troubled smile, to yearn for his return, and to hope for his happiness the way those who adore him have; then, perhaps, you would have stood there, as Alec Wilder must have, in exquisite fear, not daring to hope that the voice was real.

After a long silence, I handed Jimmy the book and started for the door. As I left the room, he quoted from the book: "What is essential is invisible to the eye."

I went for a long walk through the deserted streets of New York. The Little Prince walked with me that night,

reminding me, "What is essential is invisible to the eye. . . . One can see only with the heart."

When I returned to the hotel room, Jimmy was not there. On my bed was Jimmy's copy of *The Little Prince*, and pinned to it a note printed in a child's hand. It read: *For a gift one is always beholden*, and it was not signed.

The job I had hoped to get with an ad agency hadn't panned out, so I went back to work for C.B.S., this time in the New York offices. After a few weeks in the Communications Department, I was promoted to a job with the Press Relations Department. The salary was considerably lower than it had been when I had been with C.B.S. in Hollywood, but since my funds were running very low, I had no alternative and was not inclined to be too particular. The work was, for the most part, routine, and left me with enough time and an office in which I could do my own work.

Jimmy made his regular daily acting rounds, getting occasional bit parts on live television shows, but, for a while, little seemed to be happening for him.

Late one afternoon he came up to the room with a girl and introduced her to me as Chris White. She was thin and blond, and definitely an actress.

"We're going to do a scene for the Actors Studio," Jimmy proclaimed happily. "Chris wrote it."

He had met her that afternoon in the Shurr office. After a cup of coffee at Walgreen's drugstore, they had decided to do her scene together and meant to waste no valuable time getting to it.

Since the days of the Whitmore acting class, over a year before, Jimmy's greatest dream had been getting into the Actors Studio. It had been Whitmore's advice to him to go to New York where he could get into the Studio and study under men like Elia Kazan and Lee Strasberg. In the several months he had been in New York he had not made

an attempt at getting an audition, because he was in awe of the school and didn't want to try for it, fearing he might not be ready. But when Chris White appeared on the scene with a ready-made script and a definite audition, he jumped aboard, not allowing himself time to think it over.

With loving care and caution they shaped the scene over a period of weeks. Feeling that the original scene was inadequate, they threw it out and started on another short scene which Chris had written. In the final stages of rehearsal they turned to me for the objective advice and direction I could offer. By the time audition day rolled around, they had the scene beautifully molded.

Frightened and nervous, they took their humble offering before the mighty High Priests of their craft. Jimmy was so nervous that Chris had to shock him into going through with it.

Just before they were called up to do the scene, Jimmy went out for a drink of water.

"I'm not going out there," he insisted. "We're not ready yet."

"Listen, you little wretch," Chris threatened. "You're not going to louse up my audition. We're here now, and we're going through with it. Now get out there!"

They were two of the fifteen who were accepted out of the one hundred and fifty who auditioned. Jimmy was reputedly the youngest member of the Actors Studio. He was twenty-one, and he belonged.

That night I looked over his shoulder, as he sat at the desk writing a letter to Marcus and Mom, his aunt and uncle back on the farm in Indiana. It was a rare thing to see him write a letter. In all the time we had lived together, I had seen him write only once or twice. As he put his thoughts on paper, I could see what joy filled his heart.

...I have made great strides in my craft. After months of auditioning, I am very proud to announce that I am a member of the Actors Studio. The greatest school of the

theater. It houses great people like Marlon Brando, Julie Harris, Arthur Kennedy, Elia Kazan, Mildred Dunnock, Kevin McCarthy, Monty Clift, June Havoc, and on and on and on. Very few get into it, and it is absolutely free. It is the best thing that can happen to an actor. I am one of the youngest to belong

If I can keep this up and nothing interferes with my progress, one of these days I might be able to contribute something to the world....

Tell Mrs. Brookshire when you see her that I have never forgotten the Thespian creed. "Act well your part for there all honor lies."

In the same letter he asked for help, a thing he disliked more than anything else, a thing he rarely did. The cost of living in New York was high. The few jobs he had been getting had not been enough to pay for more than the rent and very meager meals. In two years the only new item of clothing he had bought had been one very inexpensive suit, his first since high school. Only once or twice had he turned to his aunt and uncle for help, although in each of their warm letters they had always made it a point to offer.

So, putting the pen to paper, he forced his hand: ... *I would more than appreciate it if you could spare 10 dollars or so. I need it rather desperately. I am sorry that when I write I always need something. Sometimes I feel that I have lost the right to ask; but because I don't write isn't an indication that I have forgotten. I shall never forget what you and Mom have done for me. I want to repay you....*

It takes time and many disappointments. I'll try very hard not to take too long. If I have asked for help at the wrong time, please forgive me and I will understand. . . .

A few days later a letter of encouragement arrived from Indiana. Enclosed within was some money, more than he had requested. He was grateful and would try to stretch it, but he knew it wouldn't last very long.

To supplement his income from time to time, Jimmy found odd jobs in television. Several times he had been paid to stand in on quiz programs and such, letting contestants throw pies at him. For *Beat the Clock* he stood in during the run-throughs of the games before the show went on the air, playing each of the complicated and ingenious games so that the producers could time the show. Instead of resenting what might have appeared to some as a degrading means of making money, he rather enjoyed it all and made the most fun out of it that he could. After all, it was only a means to an end, and his end was well worth a few pies in the face.

He had prepared his first scene to be done in class at the Actors Studio and was very anxious to try it out. When he prepared an acting job, it was his habit to put his heart and soul into it, analyzing, calculating every inch of the way to make sure that he was right. As in everything he tried, he had to know that what he was doing was right.

He took his scene before the class and director Strasberg. The usual procedure was to have the class and Strasberg watch the scene and then tear it and the actor apart, to ascertain where the mistakes had been made and determine how they could have been avoided. The one thing Jimmy had not prepared for was severe criticism.

He swore he would never go back to the Studio after what Strasberg had tried to do to him. He felt it might work on some, but never on him. He was not the kind of person who could prosper from the soul-searing criticism they were used to handing out at the school. Strasberg had torn him asunder, clawing at his psyche and digging too deep within him, making it impossible for him to paste himself back together. The experience had shattered him.

"I don't know what's inside of me," he stormed. "I don't know what happens when I act—inside. But if I let them dissect me, like a rabbit in a clinical research laboratory or

something, I might not be able to produce again. They might sterilize me!

“That man had no right to tear me down like that. You keep knocking a guy down like that and you’ll take the guts away from him. And what’s an actor without guts?”

For a long time he did not return to the Actors Studio.

Slowly the midsummer months crept up on us, and with them came the annual theater and television disease, the summer hiatus, the time when many of the television shows go off the air and the theater becomes less active, leaving actors to sweat out hungrily the muggy New York summer or to take jobs in summer stock companies out of town. Jimmy decided not to try stock, but to remain in the city and take his chances at getting some of the few jobs that would be available.

Like a variation on an old theme, money soon became a major problem again. It was a common occurrence for us to divide the sixty or seventy cents we might have between us to buy a slim dinner at the Automat. Lunch was a forgotten social pastime.

Fortunately, we were always assured a hearty breakfast every morning. We had taken to the habit of having morning coffee at a little coffee shop near the hotel. After a week of the same pattern, we became acquainted with a brash blond waitress named Marie, who served us every morning. It seemed, from her authoritative attitude around the shop, that she was accustomed to having things her way. When Marie learned that Jimmy was a struggling actor and that I was a struggling something-or-other in television, her great big Brooklyn heart opened to us. Each morning thereafter, when we would order only coffee, we would be served orange juice, a cup of freshly cut fruit, two eggs, toast and coffee. But, somehow, our checks would invariably be made out for only coffee.

Our not-too-influential guardian angel also managed to arrange another little deal to help keep us from starvation's door. One day the commercial photographer whose studio was located off the lobby of the Iroquois was stood up by a model and turned frantically to the desk clerk at the hotel for a suggestion. For some reason the clerk assumed that both Jimmy and I were models. He called the room, found me in, and offered me the job for ten dollars. From that day on we took turns working for the photographer whenever he found himself in a spot.

But despite Marie's daring generosity and the photographer's dilemma, we remained insolvent. As the weeks went by and work failed to materialize, Jimmy became more and more depressed. The unbearable heat of the city, the frustration of being out of work, the ever-present threat of next month's rent had him oppressed to the point of despondency.

In an effort to offer him some relief, Rogers Brackett invited Jimmy on a week end at the home of some of his friends who lived up the Hudson River. The idea of a refreshing week end in the country appealed to him, as much as it would have to me, so he accepted gratefully.

When he returned to town he described enthusiastically the fine time he had had with Broadway producer Lemuel Ayers and his wife, Shirley, at their home. He had not fully realized Ayers' importance in the theatrical world of New York and was excited to know that he had added another successful professional to his growing list of friends. He had particularly enjoyed puttering in their garden and listening attentively to the fascinating inside conversations about Lem's forthcoming production of N. Richard Nash's *See the Jaguar*. It was his impression that the Ayerses liked him, since they had invited him back for another week end, but that they did not realize he was an actor.

I was aware, as he talked, that somewhere in the back of his shrewd, calculating mind there was a plot abrew, based

on a glimmering hope, a dream for the near future which very much involved the Ayerses and *See the Jaguar*.

The week ends in the country made the days between in the city more bearable. But, in spite of the relief, Jimmy's despondency over the lack of work continued.

He tried to spend his free time reading and studying. Even when things were grimmest, he remained very active, meeting and getting to know new people, finding new and unusual things around New York that fascinated him, and discovering a little more about himself each day.

Often he would spend the late hours chatting with actors over coffee in some theatrical hangout. He would walk the streets and talk with people, anybody who looked interesting. He became acquainted with Moondog, the blind man in robes who wanders the streets of New York making music on dried bones and strange devices. He would talk at length with cabbies, waitresses, shine boys, newsstand operators, winos, Greenwich Village cellar intellectuals, art enthusiasts at the Museum of Modern Art, degenerates of all types, professional and amateur photographers, and, in general, any human being who was willing to indulge him, willing to feed his hungry mind. So he went, from street to street in New York, draining every available soul of its life experience, learning, absorbing all he had to know of life and its mystery.

It occurred to me that his activities closely paralleled those of an actor he had met briefly at the Actors Studio, Marlon Brando, the controversial young actor whom, it was evident, Jimmy admired above any other of his school. His interest in Brando, the person, had evolved as a result of the similarity in their backgrounds. They had both been brought up on farms; they had both come to enjoy the pleasure and convenience of the motorcycle; they were both rugged individualists; and they were both students at the Actors Studio. It was only natural that Jimmy should feel some sort of identification with the successful Mr. Brando.

Perhaps, if Brando's methods of studying life had given him the insight into human nature to make him so fine an actor, the same methods might serve Jimmy as well, in his own individual way.

Regardless of what the impetus for his activities was, Jimmy was sincerely interested in everything around him. New York was stimulating his mind to a point where it was more alert than it had ever been before.

One night, during a period when he had been reading a lot of modern literature, he came across a reference to something from classical literature. He asked me to suggest something in the classic vein to read. Since the reference had been to Plato, I suggested he start there.

The next night he turned up with a thick volume of Plato's works and immediately began reading a section on Democratic Education.

After an hour or so of concentrated reading, he slammed the book shut and said, "I'll buy you a glass of beer. Just one, though."

For a long time, since the traffic court episode in California, I had known Jimmy was an expert bluff artist, especially when he was in a tough spot. It was a trait, I later discovered, he had picked up from his fair-minded, mild-mannered Uncle Marcus, a man who is more canny than many a statesman, in his own homely way. But I had never witnessed an example, except subjectively, of how Jimmy applied this trait to his process of drawing from people what he wanted to know.

=As chance had it, we ran into an acquaintance of Jimmy's at the bar. The man was a writer and was apparently well educated. In less than five minutes Jimmy had him deep in a discussion of Plato's theories in general. Although he had read a mere twenty pages or so by the philosopher, he spoke with the authority =and enthusiasm of a scholar. When that man left the bar an hour later, I know he would have sworn that Jimmy was an expert on the subject of

Platonic philosophy. But, expert or bluffer, Jimmy drew no erroneous conclusions during that conversation, primarily because he let the man do most of the talking.

As we returned to the hotel, I defined for myself what I had learned, the secret of Jimmy's little game: Let the other fellow do most of the talking and you will learn what he thinks you already know.

Although the actual jobs were few and far between, Jimmy's career was progressing steadily. With each job the roles were getting bigger and better. Yet there was no feeling of steady growth. If anything, the climb to success seemed infinite and painfully slow, judging by the degree of progress during the past two years.

Jimmy remained relentlessly dedicated and determined to stick to it and wait for time to creep by, until that day when he would arrive. Ceaselessly, he made his acting rounds and followed the trade papers for hints of new productions in which he might be interested.

When he discovered that Mary Chase was planning a new production, *Bernadine*, in the fall, he tried to make an appointment with her for an interview, but before it could be arranged, Miss Chase left for Colorado. He was not discouraged, since there was still a chance that he might have an opportunity to audition for a lead role before the play went into production.

Also, he had been auditioning for the Clarence Day, Jr., role in the proposed C.B.S television series *Life With Father*, but the producers had made no decisions.

Life had the aspects of an endurance test, but Jimmy had long since accepted the fact that half of an actor's life is spent waiting. So, squelching his anxieties, he waited and lived.

Late in August the Ayerses invited Jimmy to join them on a ten-day cruise to Cape Cod, stipulating that he was to act as a member of the crew. Jimmy had long been interested in

boats, as much as in almost everything else, and he eagerly snatched at the opportunity to learn more about them. And, indeed, by the time he returned he had absorbed most of the rudiments of boating and navigation. For weeks thereafter he talked enthusiastically of boats and boating, but carefully avoided discussing the social events of the trip.

I had learned that it was natural for him to avoid direct discussions of his private activities, since he had a guarded, almost protective, attitude toward his career aims and goals and the methods he used to attain them. Consequently, I knew better than to press him for details about the Ayerses and *See the Jaguar*.

Out of a growing Awareness that he needed people, that he was going to have to exist in a world full of them, Jimmy began developing a knack of complimenting people's egos by taking a deep and sincere interest in the things they liked the most. He had, by the time he took the boat trip, matured enough to realize that to ingratiate Himself with the other people aboard, in a natural and easy manner, by being friendly and genial, yet remaining true to his own character, was a simpler and wiser way to enjoy himself and to be enjoyed. He was also shrewd enough to realize the importance of all this to his career. When Jimmy left for the trip, I was uncertain, but when he returned, it was obvious from his attitude that he had not only enjoyed himself, but that all had gone well; he was due to hear more from the Ayerses—and more about *See the Jaguar*.

When Jimmy accepted the invitation to take the trip, it was decided that we would give up the hotel room, since I could not afford to carry the burden alone, and since the trip had come precisely at rent time, Jimmy, totally unconcerned for his living arrangements when he returned—after all, that was a whole ten days off—left the problem of finding another place to live entirely up to me.

I had run into a girl who had been with us in the Theater Arts Department at U.C.L.A. She had been sharing a five-room apartment on Forty-sixth Street with another girl since her arrival in New York. The apartment was a summer sublet, rented from June until the middle of September, and it was the largest apartment I had seen up to that time in New York.

Just before Jimmy left on the boat trip, the girl's roommate decided to accept another offer of an even nicer apartment on the East Side. So our friend from U.C.L.A., being of a generous nature and somewhat afraid to stay in so large a place alone, offered Jimmy and me living quarters in the back bedroom.

Having long abandoned any conventional compunctions about such living arrangements, I accepted. It was common, if not the rule, for struggling young theater people in New York to participate in community living. Apartments were often hard to find and seldom inexpensive, and because of the indefinite nature of the theater business, an actor never knowing when he would be called out of town for a performance or engagement, many "share apartments" of a transient type were in existence all over town. Had I been better acquainted with more people, and had I asked around more, I would undoubtedly have found several such situations into which I could have dropped myself. But this one was at hand, and there were to be only three of us, so I moved in without hesitation.

When Jimmy returned, he joined us, and for several weeks all went well. Gradually, however, our funds dwindled to a panic level. It was only through the combined resources of Dizzy's salary, our friend's salary, my salary, and Jimmy's infrequent television checks that we were able to buy enough food for our four enormously hungry mouths.

Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, the people from whom the girl had been renting the apartment reappeared and

demanded their home. There was little we could do, since the girls had made no lease, but to look for another place. By this time, Dizzy, too, was looking for a cheaper place to live, so, asking her to join us, we took an adequate apartment farther uptown.

The night before we moved we were particularly broke, because we had had to make an advance payment of the rent on the new place. We had between us less than a dollar on which to eat. So, like scavengers, we took all the leftovers from the refrigerator and made with them a soupy stew into which Jimmy dumped a half package of month-old vermicelli. It was late by the time we sat down to dinner, and our stomachs were singing out in a discordant chorus of hunger cries. As we sat eating the mess, not one of us would acknowledge the presence of the tiny bugs floating atop the broth. Each of us surreptitiously dipped out the little intruders and continued to eat in silence. Necessity is the mother of many things, one of which is not choosiness.

The new apartment was an adventure to us at first. It was in a charming little brownstone right off Central Park in the West Eighties. A brick street ran in front of the building, and every night we could hear the hollow cloppity-clop of horses' hoofs as the police cavalry returned to the stables down the street. In the stillness of the late evenings, when the only light in the apartment was the light that poured in from the street lamp outside through the louvered shutters on the high windows, the sound created the illusion that we were somewhere back in those wonderful days around the turn of the century in New York, when Lillian Russell and Diamond Jim Brady were the talk of the town and horseless carriages were still a curiosity.

The new place was sparsely furnished and lacked kitchen supplies and bedding. From friends and enemies we collected pots, pans, and dishes, but from no one could we obtain bedding. Since it was too expensive to buy, we were forced to sleep without it, until such time as each of us

could afford to buy some, or until some charitable member of our respective families would send us a tom sheet and a shrunken blanket.

Each night we retired on bare mattresses, warding off the cold October winds with bathrobes, overcoats, and anything available that would reach from chin to ankle. We all shared the dream of a day when we could slip between clean sheets again and sleep under the protective warmth of a real blanket.

One night, returning from a dinner at the home of one of his financially securer friends whose mother had been visiting town, Jimmy entered the apartment carrying a large box and looking as though he had never seen us before. Completely ignoring our presence, he carefully set himself to taking from the box two very clean and very blue bed sheets, one equally clean and blue pillow slip, a downy pillow, and a very warm-looking blue wool blanket. In a performance that did justice to his art, he began to make his bed, making certain that every shake of the sheet, every tuck, every smoothing, was done with casual, careless ease. He never said a word as we sat watching him with longing, envious eyes. When he had finished, he slipped into the neatly made dream bed, cooing and gurgling like a freshly fed baby. Without a conference, without a decision, without a word, the three of us rose in unison, walked calmly to his bed, and tore the sheets out from under him. Satisfied that his bed was a total mess, we all retired, leaving Jimmy to laugh uncontrollably in a tangle of sheets on the floor.

On occasional evenings we treated ourselves to a game of bullfight. Jimmy would take his brilliant red practice cape and bull horns from their decorative spot on the wall and prepare for our brownstone *corrida*. Assigning Dizzy and me the roles of first and second *torros*, he would take his place in the middle of the cleared room, assume the attitude of a true *torrero*, stamp his foot, and summon, “*Aie, torro!*” From a dark corner of the room bull number one—

Dizzy, holding the horns to her head—would snort, paw the parquet floor, and clomp across the room in a fearsome charge. In a succession of graceful passes, the fair-haired matador would manipulate the awesome creature, until, with the precision of a master, he would slay the beast and parade around the room in triumph to the frenzied cheers of his audience, a single peon, me. Then, without a pause to refresh himself, the fearless matador called forth his second adversary.

Generally it would be in the middle of my second charge that a knock would come at our door. The gentle building superintendent would stand there in his nightshirt and beg that the slaughter cease so that he and his wife, who lived in the apartment directly below, might get some sleep. Bull number two would be set to pasture for use another night and our game would end. After all, there was no fun in a bullfight where the *torros* had to tiptoe.

Soon after the novelty of the apartment wore off, community living ceased to be an adventure and became, instead, a problem. In such an arrangement, much consideration of the other fellow is required. Jimmy was not used to making such compromises, nor, for that matter, was I. We had learned to tolerate one another in a living situation, but neither of us had learned to tolerate the habits of the girls. The girls, too, had their complaints. If we weren't battling over the maze of bras, panties, and stockings that were making access to the bathroom impossible, we were haggling over the unwashed dishes, the open windows, the closed windows, the selection of food, the selection of radio programs, etc., etc., etc. For a time this can be fun and often amusing, but when you are suffering the pressures of being jobless and when you have just been through a torturous summer in New York, it isn't the kind of game you care to play for very long.

"I'm huuuuuungry!" complained Dizzy, as it seemed to me she did every hour on the hour.

So Jimmy, she, and I went down to a local hamburger joint for a three-way bowl of chili and beans.

"Let's go to Indiana, to the farm," Jimmy suggested, scraping the last bean from the bowl.

"Okay," agreed Dizzy.

"Where?" I asked.

"To the farm, Mom and Marcus's place," he explained. "You'd both love it. It's all clean and fresh, lots of trees and open fields. Tons of good food, chicken, steak, all that *jazz*. We've got cows, pigs, the whole bit."

"They got horses?" asked Dizzy, who loved horses with an uncontrollable passion and rode like a champion, or so she had told us every time she saw or smelled a horse.

"Yep," answered Jimmy.

"Let's go now," she decided, rising from the booth.

"Now wait a minute," I injected, pulling her back to her seat. "I can't just up and leave. What about C.B.S? I've got to go to work tomorrow."

"Ach, C.B.S.," Jimmy spat. "Think they'll miss you for a week or so? You don't owe them anything. If you want to go, just tell them you're sick."

"Yeah, sick," echoed Dizzy.

"What do they know?" added Jimmy.

"Sure," Dizzy chimed in. "You can have someone call every day and tell them you're still sick until we get back. We haven't got a phone, so they can't even check on you."

The idea of a vacation was very appealing to me.

"Well, let me see," I began to rationalize. "I guess they'd even pay me, if I was sick. It could be a sort of paid vacation, if you can look at it that way."

"That's right," said Jimmy. "And you're supposed to get paid tomorrow, right? Well, if you don't pick up your check tomorrow, and you don't come back for a week, you'll have two weeks' pay waiting for you when you get back. Just think about that for a while."

"Naw, it won't work," I said. "Besides, we haven't got enough money to make the trip. The fare alone—"

"It won't cost a thing," Jimmy contradicted. "We'll hitchhike out there, and it won't cost a cent on the farm." "Hitchhike!" both Dizzy and I shouted.

"Sure," Jimmy said. "It's only eight hundred miles."

"Three of us hitch eight hundred miles to Indiana and eight hundred miles back. That's a laugh. Nobody would pick us up. All we've got is about ten dollars between us. What if we got stranded someplace? I should also take a chance of losing my job? No thanks. It all sounds very nice, but not for me," I concluded.

"Maybe he's right," mumbled Dizzy dejectedly.

"Well, it was just an idea," Jimmy grumbled.

The next morning, after taking a bus from New York to the New Jersey Turnpike, the three of us stood with our thumbs flapping in the whoosh of passing cars. We had packed a single suitcase, gathered our pennies, and slipped out on our sleeping friend, leaving her a note with instructions to call C.B.S every day and report that I was sick. After two rides, we found ourselves at the western end of the Pennsylvania Turnpike.

It was about 10 pm., and we were very hungry, especially Dizzy. Since there was no restaurant open in the little town where we had been deposited by our last ride, we were obliged to fill up on several dishes of ice cream in an ice-cream parlor which had remained open, obviously just for our business. Somewhat satisfied, we stepped back onto the highway and put out three cold thumbs, hoping that some good soul would transport us through the long, cold night ahead.

Within a minute a Nash Rambler station wagon pulled up and we hopped in. There were two men in the front seat, the driver, a burly man who looked definitely out of proportion to the little car he was driving, and a sailor who,

we learned, was also hitching a ride, but only to the next town.

"This fellow's only going as far as Youngstown," said the driver in a deep, gruff voice. "After that, one of you can move up here with me. That'll give you all room to spread out and sleep, if you want."

We sat there, trying to size up the situation. But, as far as we could determine, the driver of this car was just a great big good Joe who liked company. Yet, we couldn't be sure; it was pretty dark.

After we dropped the sailor, I moved to the front seat and we all settled down for the long ride ahead. He was passing very close to our destination, but it would take the whole night to get there.

"I guess we should introduce ourselves," offered the driver. "My name is Clyde."

I was sure he heard the muffled giggles from the back seat.

After introducing ourselves, Jimmy leaned in and, using his best fraternity personality, asked, "What do you do, Mr. Clyde?"

"It's not Mr. Clyde. Clyde's my first name," he corrected. "Tina catcher."

"What do you catch," Dizzy inquired.

"Baseballs," he answered. "I'm a professional ball player."

Using this lead, Jimmy began to draw him out. His full name was Clyde McCullough, and he was a catcher for the Pittsburgh Pirates. He was headed for an exhibition game in Des Moines, Iowa, a game he would have to play the following day after a night without sleep.

Then he turned the conversation to the three of us, learning from us who we were, what we did, and where we were going.

"You know, more than any other people in the world, I admire show people, especially actors," he said. "When I think of all the sacrifice and heartbreak that goes into a

career in the theater, I can't help but wonder how you kids manage to stick to it.

"I think it's great, having a specific goal in life and sticking to it, regardless of the odds. I mean, I know a lot of people still like to make it rough on actors and show people. This country's been that way a long time. Never gave enough credit to the theater and actors for the cultural benefits they bring to us. Why, this is still one of the few countries in the world where the arts aren't subsidized by the government. It's embarrassing. Here we are, the greatest country in the world, and we haven't got the sense to underwrite the arts."

Mr. McCullough had just made three friends.

As we drove through the night, he told us of his life and his hopes, of his wife and children, of his farm in Maryland. We told him of our individual aspirations and our present lack of progress, and he consoled us with sincere encouragement. When we stopped for coffee, he discovered, through Dizzy's plaintive groaning, that we had had no dinner. He bought us food, refusing to take our money. He asked us if we would like to travel on with him to Des Moines, watch the game, and drive back the following day, to be dropped at the same spot in Indiana. We thanked him for his kindness, but declined.

In the short span of a cold October night, while driving across the country, four souls had come into complete communication. When we left that man at a highway intersection north of Fairmount, Indiana, there were tears in his eyes.

Just before he left, he drew me aside and said, "I know you kids haven't got much money." Then, withdrawing several bills from his pocket, he offered them to me, adding, "Don't say anything to Dizzy and Jim until I've left."

I could think of nothing to say. I made no move to accept the gift, but stood for a moment marveling at the man's kindness, grateful to have known him. He understood,

because he stuffed the money back into his pocket, smiled, got into his car, and drove away.

Shivering, we stood in the cold pre-dawn light and watched his car disappear down the road. Jimmy whispered, "What is essential is invisible to the eye." Dizzy was crying.

Although I was certain that none of the three of us would ever see Clyde McCullough again, I knew that none of us would forget him.

Fairmount, Indiana, is a peaceful, wholesome little farm town near Marion. The countryside is a level expanse of gently rolling fields of grain and corn, interspersed with occasional sycamore groves and quietly twisting streams. In the winter all is muffled under the soft layer of snow which hugs the fertile earth protectively; in the spring thaws the streams and rivers flow faster, accenting the rhythm of the land coming alive; in the summer the rich soil produces, and the verdure is so thick one can smell it; and in the fall, after a brief spectacle of magnificent color, the trees, the land lie ghostly barren, waiting silently for the long sleep to come.

A few miles outside of Fairmount, just past a plainly peaceful and serenely beautiful cemetery and trim little country church, rests the Winslow farm, where Marcus and Ortense Winslow have lived all their married life. The Winslow house is clean, white, and friendly, as it has been for over fifty years. The farm is large and efficiently run with the latest and most modern equipment that Marcus can buy. There are cows, chickens, sheep, pigs, tractors, threshers, combines, reapers, fields of corn, fields of wheat, running brooks, and silent ponds. It is everything a farm should be; it is pastoral.

From the moment we arrived, the Winslows opened their home and hearts to us. Mom, as Jimmy called Ortense, saw to it that we had plenty of good food and clean, warm beds.

With quiet joy and affection she attended to the needs and whims of her oldest son, for that is what she considered Jimmy. The more he boasted of her cooking, the more loving care she put into the preparation of the meals. Marcus gave us the run of the farm, taking time and patience to show us around and explain the mysteries of farming.

After all the years of seeing Jimmy alone and without a family, it was a wonderful thing to watch him touch again the gentle roots of his early years. He was back in his element Again, and he loved it.

At the first opportunity, he got his old motorcycle out of the barn, dusted it off, and tuned it up. Since his last days in high school, he had not ridden his bike and he was anxious to remember. We stood in the front yard, watching him as he raced down the level highway in front of the house, putting on a show in cycle maneuvering that was breathtaking. Assuming a prone position, his stomach on the seat and feet extended out behind, he whizzed past us in a display of bravado and skill that would have impressed a professional stunt rider.

When he had finished his exhibition, he patted the machine and turned to Marcus. "I guess I'll never sell it," he said. "It's like a friend and brother. And friends are hard to find in the theater."

At night, around the large dining-room table, Jimmy discussed the farm and its problems with Marcus, learning from his uncle the complications of farming in our present economic structure. Marcus beamed with pride as Jimmy listened attentively. He was seeing in Jimmy a more matured and developed young man, a young man he had raised and who, only a few short years before, had left his household a mere boy.

His family listened closely while Jimmy carefully explained the progress he was making in his career, while he told of his hopes and dreams for the future.

Marcus smiled approval. "You're doing all right, Jim. All right." And Mom nodded agreement.

Ortense was touched by Jimmy's concern over the increase in pain due to the arthritis that had begun to gnaw at her hands. She giggled at the sight of Jimmy, sitting at the kitchen table and calling directives to Dizzy and me, while we washed the dishes each night to lighten her burden.

"Some day, when I make it," Jimmy confided to us in hushed tones late one night after the family was asleep, "I'm going to see to it that they sell this place and move to a drier climate, like Arizona, where Mom's arthritis won't bother her so much.

Some day they're going to have the kind of life they deserve, without all the work and worry."

Little Marcus Winslow, Jr., was particularly happy to have his "big brother" home again. Jimmy spent many hours with Markie, explaining things to him and guiding him in his art work, at which Markie was proficient beyond his age. Whenever he would find in the boy's make-up traces of his own character, Jimmy would expand with pride, remembering the days in Fairmount when he, too, was blooming forth into manhood. He tried, in the brief time allotted, to encourage little Markie in all that he felt was important.

Jimmy took us to his old high school, where, with a bit of his ego showing and the flourish of his own special brand of bravado, he took over for a few days. His drama teacher, Adeline Nall, was more than pleased to see him and turned her classroom over to the three of us. Jimmy spoke elaborately on the art of acting; Dizzy spoke on modern dance techniques, demonstrating some of the movements, to the enchantment of her audience; and I lectured on television directing and writing.

None of us was anywhere near enough of a master of his craft to warrant the display of unabashed authoritative lecturing, and we were aware of it. But it was greatly rewarding to our starving egos to have those youngsters pay such close attention and regard us with such inappropriate awe. After a year or so of trying to convince the professional world in New York of our capabilities, it was a wonderful boost to have so many accept us as masters of what we were trying to attain.

After too short a time, a call from Jimmy's agent in New York brought our bliss to an end. We had slept well, been fed well, and had been accepted. We could ask for no more. The time on the farm had brought with it the kind of relief our tired souls had required. After a pause at the cemetery where Jimmy's mother was buried, we were driven to the main highway and left there to hitch a ride eight hundred miles back to the city, back to the endless task of finding our ways.

Our return to the city brought with it great excitement. The call had been from Lem Ayers, asking Jimmy to read for one of the leading roles in *See the Jaguar*. Although the chances of his getting the part seemed slim, since another young actor had been reading the role during all the auditions for potential backers in the preceding months and seemed set for the part, Jimmy still clung to the thread of hope that, perhaps, he could read well enough to get the juicy part in spite of the odds. The part would be a great showcase for the actor who got it, and Jimmy needed a showcase badly. He had read the script and knew that it was an opportunity that might not come again for a long time, since there are few roles which seem tailor-made for any actor. All these months he had had a dream in the back of his mind and he was determined to make that dream come true.

His nerves were showing the night of the reading. He rushed around the apartment in a state of panic, trying to

get dressed in a totally disorganized manner.

"Oh, no!" he bellowed. "Oh, no!" he roared, and threw himself on the floor.

"Now what?" prodded Dizzy, losing her patience.

"I haven't even got a clean shirt to wear! I haven't got a *shirt*" he wailed.

"Go nude," Dizzy suggested. "At least you'll have their attention."

"Oow, oow, oow," he groaned as he climbed to the window sill and teetered there, threatening to throw himself out onto the platform five feet below.

Reluctantly I went to my drawer and withdrew one of my three dress shirts. I kissed it farewell, shed a tear, and handed it to him.

"You get the part and it's yours," I announced nobly.

With a playful wink he snatched the shirt and ran into the bathroom with his tie.

"Dizzzzzy!" he screamed like a tortured man.

Dizzy rushed into the bathroom and helped him untangle his hands from the massive knot in which he had caught them j| trying to tie his tie. Then, while he bounced and bobbed like a nervous little boy, she tied the tie for him, combed his unruly hair, tucked in his shirt, gave him a pat on the behind, and sent him on his way.

"We'll wait for you at the Paris," she shouted after him, as he dashed down the street toward the wrong subway entrance. !

I went to the theater with Dizzy and tried to concentrate on the movie, while she fumbled through her work. After a painful hour, I went downstairs and joined Dizzy at the coffee bar. We sat there, drinking one cup of coffee after another, building our nervous tension to the bursting point. Jimmy had not arrived by the time she got off, so, unable to sit still any longer, we walked in the direction of the place where he had gone to read.

We were halfway there when we saw him walking slowly down the street toward us. We stopped, afraid to know the answer, and tried to determine from his expression what had happened. His face told the story. No one said a word. We just stood there on the street corner, laughing and crying like three crazy, grateful little kids. After many intense months of clinging to a slippery handful of faith and hope, the slightest part of a dream come true can be an exalting experience.

During the weeks that followed, Jimmy was completely absorbed in the part he was learning. Most of his conscious hours were spent learning his lines and delving deeper and deeper into the character he was to play. After the first few weeks, he had the part under control and turned his full attention to a more complicated, more difficult job, that of learning to sing the little folk-type song which Alec Wilder had composed for the production. Since he was practically tone-deaf, Jimmy worried about the fact that he was going to have to sing on stage more than he worried about the acting. Rehearsals helped him with the acting, but nothing could help him with the singing.

Night after night Dizzy and I sat with him, going over the song again and again, repeating the pattern of the minor-key melody until, at last, he almost had it.

At first, it was amusing to listen to him trying to repeat the melody but getting those awful ear-wrenching moans and wails, instead. But after he conquered it, he refused to leave it, singing it over and over again, until we could hardly stand it any longer. Often in the middle of the night I would wake up to hear him in the darkness feeling his way through the melody:

 "Green . . .
 briar . . .
 blue . . .
 fire . . ."

See the Jaguar was affording Jimmy his first real chance to work closely with top professional talent on Broadway and, as usual, he meant to derive from the experience as much as he possibly could.

Through his past experiences in television, Jimmy had made for himself a reputation of being difficult to direct. It was not his intention to be difficult, but too often he was disappointed by the young television directors, whose lack of experience kept them from giving him what he required of a director. The prime requisite was that a director be an artist, constantly true to himself and the script, dedicated to the fundamental importance of the piece he was directing. All too often in the rush of television there was no time, or at least not the proper amount of time, that could be devoted to the esthetics of a production, since the technical problems were usually the greatest usurpers of time. Consequently, the men with whom he had worked in television had, in Jimmy's estimation, failed him, friction had resulted, and his bad reputation had grown within the television industry.

Though some might have attributed this to temperament, it was more a matter of artistic principles with Jimmy, having little or nothing to do with temperament. It was true that his nature was to place full confidence and trust in the people with whom he worked. But he believed this was only natural and to be expected. It was only when people betrayed their own personal integrity, baring their human flaws and professional inadequacies, that he turned from them in disgust. He was tolerant of imperfection only when it was admitted. A man who refused to admit to his imperfections and limitations, who declined to take the time and patience to improve himself and grow out of his inadequacies, but who, instead, clung to them dogmatically, was a danger to himself and a threat to those with whom he

worked. Personally, Jimmy had to know he was doing right, being led in the right direction. If he followed the wrong lead, he knew he would suffer a loss, and this he could not afford. Intellectually, it disturbed him to watch a man abuse his own talent and profane the name of his craft.

However, during the rehearsals of *See the Jaguar* everything went exceptionally well. Immediately he allowed himself to fall under the complete influence of his director, Michael Gordon, and the star, Arthur Kennedy. Carefully he observed everything they did, listened to their suggestions and advice, always selecting from what they offered only that which he felt he could apply to himself according to his own standards and needs. Unlike his experiences in television, in legitimate theater he was finding inspiration.

As the rehearsals progressed, Jimmy's excitement over the production mounted. Each night he returned to the apartment with detailed descriptions of all that had happened that day. Vividly he explained the progress he was making in understanding and interpreting his character. Animatedly he portrayed the power and precision of Gordon's staging. Gratefully he talked of the dinner-break discussions with Kennedy, whom he admired a great deal. Throughout the weeks of rehearsals, he kept an active eye on everything around him, realizing the significance of the experience and hoping to absorb all of it.

After he left for the out-of-town opening in Connecticut, Dizzy and I waited patiently for the big day and the reviews of the show. When the papers came out the day after the opening, we were relieved to read the fine notices Jimmy had got, but disturbed by the critics' obvious concern for the script.

"They've got some time before they open in New York," I consoled Dizzy. "Maybe it'll be enough to doctor the script."

I had never attended an opening night in New York and I could hardly afford to attend this one, but nothing could have dissuaded me from going to Jimmy's first performance

on the Broadway stage. I had my tickets weeks in advance and on opening night I was at the theater an hour before curtain time.

Since his unfortunate performance in *Macbeth* at U.C.L.A., I had not followed Jimmy's acting progress too closely. I knew that he had become an adequate actor and realized that he would not have been admitted to the Actors Studio unless people whose judgment is practically unquestionable had seen a great potential in him. Seldom had I seen any of his television broadcasts, and the few I had watched had not been extraordinarily impressive. Adequate, remained my impression of his talent. As a result, I sat in the theater, excited more by the glamor of the event and the prestige Jimmy had attained by being accepted as a legitimate actor than by the prospect of his doing an unusually fine job of acting.

When the curtain fell at the end of the play, I remained in my seat, numbed by what I had seen. Through three full acts I had watched Jimmy play a role so convincingly that I had not been able to identify him as a person I knew. I was stunned by the realization that at no time during the performance had I been aware that I was watching my friend James Dean. He had so completely created an illusion for me and the rest of the audience that I had believed in Wally Wilkins, the part he was playing, not Jimmy Dean, the boy I knew.

In one scene, when Wally was brought onstage after a beating by his tormentors and confronted his betrayer, Arthur Kennedy, by whimpering, "Who done this to me?" my heart was filled with compassion. And when Kennedy gave him his guilt-ridden answer, "I did, boy," and Wally dropped to his knees, sobbing piteously, his arms held by the men at his sides, presenting a symbol of Christ on the Cross, I wept, too.

By the time I got backstage, Jimmy's dressing room was overflowing with friends and well-wishers. Compliments

and praises filled the air. They were all there, every one of his friends, and they jammed the room to capacity. I stood silently in the doorway, wondering.

Later, at Sardi's, while waiting for the morning papers to come with the critics' reactions to the play, I sat alone for a while. Jimmy was busily engrossed in conversations and speculations with the cast, his director, the producer, and his proud agent.

As I sat there, watching him flit from table to table, watching the admiration and acceptance pour from the eyes of all with whom he talked, my thoughts were jumbled and perplexing. Mixed with the happiness I had for him were feelings of envy and fear. Perhaps this was the beginning of the end of the struggle for Jimmy. For almost three years we had striven together to attain our individual goals. Never once had it occurred to me that one of us might arrive before the other. Never once had I thought that one of us might be left behind. There had never been cause for such thoughts; there had never been time. Was I to be the one left behind? Had the time come to stop sharing a dream and start functioning in reality? I thought back to that day when I drove away from the Penthouse in Santa Monica, to that night when I read the note from Jimmy telling me he had left for New York. Then I looked about the room and caught the sound of Jimmy's laughter. And as I got up to leave the restaurant, I thought I heard myself chuckle, "Poor Bill."

Walter Kerr of the *Herald Tribune* concluded his indulgent critique of *See the Jaguar* with these words: "What started out as a surprisingly convincing evening ends as a disappointingly contrived one." The rest of the critics agreed unanimously that the play was burdened with overinsistent symbolism and contrived attitudes, making it just too pat.

On the other hand, the critics were all in accord on the subject of James Dean. Mr. Kerr captured the general sentiments of the others when he wrote: "And James Dean adds an extraordinary performance in an almost impossible role: that of a bewildered lad who has been completely shut off from a vicious world by an overzealous mother and who is coming upon both the beauty and the brutality of the mountain for the first time."

Fundamentally, the critics were right in their appraisal of the play, but it was the general feeling among those who had some connection with the production that they had been overly abusive. Jimmy was strong in his conviction that the critics had been unfair and seemed to take it as a personal affront. His hopes had rested on this play, and his heart had been in it, so it was natural for him to be bitterly disappointed with the critics' responses.

See the Jaguar ran only six performances before it closed. Jimmy's first Broadway show had been a flop, but had proved a personal triumph for him.

Feeling that he could now afford a place of his own, although he had comparatively little money, Jimmy decided to move out of the brownstone. Since the rest of us could not have carried the rent by ourselves, we abandoned the apartment and struck out on our own. For a while I shared a place with another friend, Dizzy took a dreary room somewhere in mid-town, and Jimmy went back to the Iroquois.

During the period that followed, Jimmy's career developed steadily. After *See the Jaguar*, there was much talk about James Dean around town and his agent was besieged with requests for interviews. M-G-M's New York office sent for him and told him they wanted to do a screen test. Jimmy balked at the idea of leaving New York and working in Hollywood. Television jobs began coming in more regularly, and his financial condition improved rapidly.

He didn't see much of Dizzy after that. Within a month or two she had left for the island of Trinidad, where she had got a job dancing in a club. Many girls began to pass through his life, a different one every time I looked. He would run into a new face in the Shurr office, or at Walgreen's, or Cromwell's, and attach himself to her for a few hours or, at the most, a day.

The girls would accompany him wherever he went: to his agent's office, on interviews, to rehearsals, to dinner, on walks, m to his room. None of his friends, not even his agent, Jane Deacy, could keep track of the girls. It seemed that Jimmy was searching for something he had actually never ceased looking for, someone who could release him from the still dogging, undefined obligation he thought he had to fulfill.

Out of necessity, I moved back into the Iroquois, into a room directly across the court from Jimmy's room. We began spending more time together and would communicate constantly through our windows, which faced each other. When his shade was drawn, I knew that Jimmy was out of contact with the world, or searching.

He had met an actor named Frank Corsaro, who had appeared in *Mrs. McThing* with Helen Hayes. Jimmy fell completely under Frank's influence. Corsaro is a slight little man with a bundle of nervous energy that keeps him active twenty-four hours a day. His interests are unlimited: acting, directing, conducting, literature, art, music, the world in general.

Once again Jimmy set to his old habit of draining his new friend of everything he knew. Under Frank's tutelage, Jimmy branched out and became better acquainted with contemporary literature and modern music. Through Frank he was introduced to Huxley and Schonberg and began to delve deeply into their works in order to comprehend their significance more fully. To Jimmy, Frank was the most

intellectually stimulating person he had ever met, and they became fast friends in a very short time.

Through the years, Jimmy's personality characteristics had not changed, nor had his disposition. His moods had, as a matter of fact, become more and more frequent and each time appeared to be deeper and more complex. It seemed, as it always had to me, that the more he found out about the world, the more he absorbed, the less he liked it, and the more he pitied it.

Abandoning the little self-discipline he had learned in order to get along more readily with the people around him, he reverted to his old ways of allowing his natural reactions to control him. Self-discipline became a synonym for hypocrisy. Whenever he saw through his soul-piercing eyes, those eyes that began to delve unreasonably deep into the rot of the human race, into the sickness that is the modern mind, and find there nothing but that which made him sorrowful and bitter, he would not hold back his immediate reactions, but would rather spew them up, regardless of who was watching. When he saw sorrow, he cried, or jeered bitterly at that Power which had allowed it; when he saw humor, he laughed loud and hard; when he saw beauty, he was peaceful and gentle; and when he saw himself, he was sometimes puzzled, sometimes sickened.

Unlike so many around him, he refused to stick his head in the sand to avoid reality. What was real was real; what existed existed. There could be no denying the truth. He refused to pretend he did not see what he saw, or what he thought he saw. And, although he always tried to understand the world around him, he could not always allow himself to accept it. It might have been real, but it was not necessarily right.

For him there had to be a world where all was truth and honesty. His one major battle was with that aspect of his own psyche that was all too human. It was that which made him forget, more often than he wanted to admit, that which

made him slip into patterns of thinking and behavior which he himself so violently opposed.

Although his finances were in order and he could now afford the simpler luxuries, he adhered to his former ways, eating still in the cheaper restaurants where he had dined during the broke days, still neglecting to buy any new clothes, but wearing, instead, the same old jacket and slacks he had worn for nearly two years. He seldom, if ever, went on the town, but spent most of his time studying, talking to friends, and getting lost in the phantasmagoria of life.

Somehow he appeared to be in a distant place, very often preferring the loneliness he would inflict upon himself to the companionship of the many friends he had made. When the self-inflicted isolation became too much for him, he would venture forth to touch the world again.

Often he would go all the way to the apartment of some friend, stand outside for an hour or more, and then return to his room without ever seeing his friend. Once in a while he would surprise friends by calling and asking if he might come over. They would be shocked, when, almost upon hanging up the receiver, he would be at their door, having called from the corner phone booth where he had probably sat for some time making his decision. If there were strangers present, he might enter the apartment, take food from the refrigerator, eat in silence, listen, but never talk, and then leave without a word.

His actions were never consistent, however. Once his friends came to accept his strange and distant behavior, he might show up wearing his most genial and gregarious personality, mix in with other guests and contribute to the conversation. After a while, his friends ceased to be puzzled by his actions and came to accept him in whatever mood he appeared. If they did not learn to accept him, they did not remain his friends for long.

He bought himself a recorder, an English flute, and set about learning how to play it. Night after night I would see him sitting in the window of his small room, piping out the forlorn strains of the tunes Alec Wilder had written for him to practice. He always reminded me of the lonely shepherd when he was like that.

A twist of fate gave me my first opportunity to write for television. During the rehearsal of a television show at N.B.C., I had carelessly criticized the writing. The man to whom I had been complaining turned out to be the director of the show. He put me on the spot by daring me to write something better, which he promised he would buy. I went home, wrote a script, and was hired.

When the show was about to take its summer hiatus, there was a rumor to the effect that it would move out to Hollywood and would emanate from there starting in the fall. I was assured there would probably be a position for me on the writing staff out there. So, confident of my future and anxious to revisit my friends and family on the West Coast, I decided to leave for Hollywood.

The day I left, Jimmy and I had coffee at Cromwell's and discussed the future. There were no definite plans ahead for him. He wanted to go right on doing television work and hoped to get into another Broadway show eventually. He was very happy about the way things had turned out for me and felt sure that I would be able to avoid the less attractive aspects of Hollywood, mainly by remembering at all times everything I had learned in New York.

"Just forget about end results," he advised. "Remember, the gratification comes in the work, not in the end result. Just remember who you are and what you are, and don't take any of their guff out there."

Then, suddenly, he announced, "I've got to go," and left the drugstore.

I had some things to pack, so I went about the business of last-minute buying. When I had finished, I started down Sixth Avenue toward the hotel, intending to pack and leave. I was perturbed by Jimmy's abrupt departure and wanted to see him before I left.

As I stopped for traffic on about Forty-sixth Street, I heard someone call, "Hey, Willie!"

I turned around and spotted Jimmy sitting on a standpipe that jutted out from a building. He had three books in his hands and was busily writing something in one of them. I walked over to him.

"Deaner," I complained, "I was afraid I'd miss you. I wanted to say goodbye."

"Here," he said and shoved the books into my hands. "Read the one called "Harpies on the Seashore," in the *Maurois Reader*"

He took my hand, gave it a firm squeeze, smiled for a moment, and left.

I looked down at the books I held. The two pocket books were *Orlando* by Virginia Woolf, and *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* by Carson McCullers. The other, a hardbound edition, was *The Andre Maurois Reader*. I opened the cover to read what he had written:

To Bill—While in the aura of metaphysical whoo-haaas, ebb away your displeasures on this. May flights of harpies escort your winged trip of vengeance.

As I settled back in my seat on the plane to Hollywood that night, I thought of Jimmy back in New York, surrounded by a world of people, but somehow still so lonely, or at least so alone. What would become of him? Had he reached that point so many artists reach, where they seem to lose the right to any form of personal existence except a life of art, a point where they begin to live solely through their art and for their art? How long would he go on trying to fulfill that ambiguous obligation that cursed him? And if he did persist, where would it all lead?

And as I looked out my window, down at the clouds, down at the miniature, insignificant life below, I sighed and whispered, "Poor Jimmy."

Within a few months after I left New York, Jimmy had been cast as the Arab boy in Billy Rose's production of Andre Gide's *The Immoralist*, starring Geraldine Page and Louis Jourdan. The role was even bigger and meatier than the one he had played in *See the Jaguar*.

I later learned from him that all had gone well in the early stages of rehearsal, until the opening in Philadelphia, but I lint from there the experience had soured.

After the Philadelphia opening, Daniel Mann was called in to restage the show and assist on the re-writing. According to those who saw him and according to the critics, Jimmy had given a superlatively fine performance. Unfortunately, in the to-writing of the script, his part was so severely cut that there remained very little of the original role, which was the first hitter pill for him to swallow in that production.

Then, as the rehearsals out of town progressed, friction arose between the producer and some of the cast. Jimmy felt that Mr. Rose was inflicting bad taste and judgment on the production. Jimmy began to see the basic beauty and power of the play slipping and falling by the wayside, line by line. As what Jimmy considered an insufferable waste of artistry persisted, his anguish grew to proportions of disgust and bitterness. Not only had they sliced his own part to a fraction of what it had been, but Jimmy thought they had also tampered with the other strong elements of the fine play, until, at last, he could see only a hollow shell of what had once promised to be a great piece of theater.

Jimmy, being the most outspoken member of the cast, came to a clash of personalities with Rose too often for the little producer. As the conflict became more evident, so did

the sentiments of both Rose and Jimmy. Until, finally, a showdown was at hand.

It was Jimmy's usual pattern to place his faith and trust in his director. Feeling that Mann was the logical one in the company to stand up against Rose, asserting his authority and defending the principles involved, Jimmy relied on him, confident that, in the event of a showdown, Mann would step to his aid. When the crucial moment finally arrived, Mann sided with the producer—as possibly he should have. At any rate, Jimmy was disillusioned, and his faith curdled.

At one rehearsal, just before the New York opening, Jimmy turned to his director, asking for guidance in some aspect of the interpretation of his role. Before the entire cast Mann turned on him, shouting, "What makes you think you're so important here? You're the least of my worries. I've got other people to attend to."

It may have been that he was only trying to tell Jimmy that he was not concerned about his acting, since he was already confident that Jimmy would do a good job. Whatever the case, Jimmy had no time, no patience, no stomach to analyze the motivations for such harsh words. Hurt, disgusted, lost, he turned from the director and walked off the rehearsal stage. He left the theater, with threats of retribution ringing in his ears.

His understudy, Billy Gunn, was summoned, and the rehearsals recommenced. It was assumed by all that, according to Equity rules, Jimmy would be fired from the cast.

It took Jimmy several hours of walking and thinking to rid himself of the emotional upheaval the incident had caused him. He had to readjust to the situation, setting aside his respect for the director and washing from his consciousness all emotional contact with the production. When he had reassured himself that he could return with a calmness and rationality that would guide him through the remainder of

the rehearsals and the opening in New York, he went back to the theater.

The matter was smoothed over by the Equity representative, and Jimmy once again took over the role of the Arab boy.

The play moved to New York, where it opened to fine notices from the critics, especially for the acting done by the three principals, Page, Jourdan, and Dean. Personally, Jimmy fared very well, most of the critics predicting a great future in the theater for him. The unfortunate incidents during the making of the show were in the past, and the show had been a success.

In spite of the rave reviews and predictions of a long run on Broadway, Jimmy gave his quitting notice the night the show opened in New York. He did it quietly, unemotionally, with the detachment of an artist who just didn't care.

For his acting in *The Immoralist* Jimmy won the David Blum Award as the most promising actor of the year. He accepted it gratefully and settled back once more to wait.

There is a point in the lives of artists destined to be great and men destined to be famous where Fate steps in and offers the exact set of circumstances through which that man can demonstrate his proficiency, or the perfect vehicle through which that artist can demonstrate his talent. Once this opportunity has been afforded him, the artist or the man must take into his own hands the responsibility for following through and proving his worth.

=As Jimmy waited for his moment, another man, an active man with a long-established power and greatness of his own, was diverting some of his energy to prepare another of his many =projects, this one a screenplay which he planned to produce.

The lives of the two men had crossed occasionally, but briefly. To Elia Kazan, James Dean was an actor, a good one, « member of the Actors Studio, another actor to be watched for progress and catalogued for future reference. He had

seen Jimmy act on several occasions—in his audition for the Actors Studio, in *See the Jaguar*, and in *The Immoralist*, and he knew that he had a perfect vehicle already in preparation in which he might be able to use the boy with the strange, disturbed quality.

On the other hand, to Jimmy, Elia Kazan was a master of his craft, a champion of his school of acting and thinking, a man who had turned the talents of Marlon Brando and other fine actors into strong, tempered forces in the theater. He was all these things that Jimmy knew and respected, but he was something more that Jimmy didn't know: a maker of his destiny.

It would have been a matter of normal procedure for any good agent to submit Jimmy's name for a role in Eli Kazan's proposed production of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* for Warner Brothers. But Jane Deacy isn't merely any good agent. She is a sensitive, intelligent woman, and when she read the screenplay for *Eden*, she knew it was just the right thing for her client, James Dean. She knew him well enough, in a personal sense, to see him immediately as Cal Trask, a lad with a disturbed psyche, a boyish exuberance, a desperate need, an infinite longing for love and acceptance. So, in her own style she gave Fate that gentle nudge and nursed the situation, convincing all concerned that *Eden* was the perfect vehicle for Jimmy's talent and that Jimmy's talent was perfect for the role in *Eden*.

With all forces working hand in hand, it was only a matter of time before Kazan took the plunge, despite Warner Brothers' trepidation about using a new name, and signed Jimmy to his first starring role in a motion picture. Once Jimmy had affixed his signature to the contract, the Fates stepped back for him to do the rest.

Several months before, he had brought his beloved motorcycle back with him from a trip to the farm in Indiana. In the years away from his home, he had grown to miss the thrill, the sweet sensation of whizzing, free as a bird in

flight, along the roads and highways. It was a luxury, indeed, for him to be able once again to have his bike.

New York is hardly the place for cycling, but any place will do if it must. So he buzzed around town from appointment to appointment, storing the machine in the entranceway of the apartment building where he lived—when he wasn't on it.

When people began pointing fingers and calling him "Brando imitator," he didn't hear them. He knew what his motorcycle meant to him; they didn't.

But, as was too often the case with the objects of his love, he got hurt by the bike. The week before he was to leave for Hollywood to start work on *Eden*, he took a bad spill. Kazan had several strong words, of his own variety, on the incident and concluded by instructing Jimmy to "stay off that motorcycle."

So, instead of cycling across country to Hollywood as he had planned, Jimmy stored the bike, packed a few things, boarded a plane, and bade farewell to New York, the city he had come to love for all it had given him.

He had arrived in New York looking for a world in which opportunities were boundless and experiences were endless, and his search had been rewarded.

"An actor," he said, "must interpret life, and in order to do so he must be willing to accept all experiences that life has to offer. In fact, he must seek out more of life than life puts at his feet. In the short span of his lifetime, an actor must learn all there is to know, experience all there is to experience—or approach that state as closely as possible. He must be superhuman in his endless struggle to inform himself. He must be relentless in his efforts to store away in the warehouse of his subconscious everything he might be called upon to use in the expression of his art. Nothing should be more important to the artist than life and the living of it, not even the ego. To grasp the full significance of

life is the actor's duty; to interpret it, his problem; and to express it, his dedication."

A self-designated symbol of this concept of art and the artist, Jimmy had made it his goal to attain, at any expense, a state of perfection through life experience. He refused to stop at any limitations in his quest for experience. He insisted upon absorbing all there was for the human mind, soul, and body. Conventional barriers had to be side-stepped, if they were to interfere; accepted patterns had to be avoided, if they were to hamper. Even the ego, the all-important self, which most of us protect at all costs from the possibility of emotional abuse, even that delicate "I" had to be overlooked in order to suffer whatever pain there was and accept whatever beauty there was.

At the age of twenty-three James Dean was wise beyond his years, more gratified, more complete, more abused than most his age. His heart and soul and mind had been opened to run the full course, to digest, without regard to the personal discomfort, whatever food they were fed, whatever scrapings he could salvage from the bottom of this human garbage pail, our modern world. He had given and he had taken more than most others, and at twenty-three James Dean was older than his century.

As he sat on the plane headed for Hollywood, watching the land between New York and Indiana slip beneath him, his dreams of the future might have been strange and unnerving, but they were not nearly as fantastic as the reality into which he was speeding.

III

“He is the Philistine who upholds and aids the heavy, cumbrous, blind, mechanical forces of society, and who does not recognize dynamic force when he meets it either in a man or a movement.”

Oscar Wilde—*De Profundis*

In the distance I could hear a persistent tapping. My mind rebelled, insisting it was only in a dream. No one could be so cruel as to rap at my door so early in the morning. It had to be a dream. That was it, a manifestation of my subconscious existence; a million little guilts had assembled and were marching, en masse, into the peace I had found in sleep. Having convinced myself, I slipped deeper into unconsciousness, gradually shutting out the steady tap, tap, tap.

Thump! Thump! Thump! There was no denying it; somebody was at my door. I sat up and blinked my eyes several times. During the night, someone had put finely granulated sand under my eyelids. Unwillingly I peeled myself from the bed and gazed out the window into the pungent blanket of smog that enveloped Hollywood and permeated my apartment. As I aimed myself at the front door, my hatred was evenly divided between the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce and the intruder who had resurrected me.

Bang! Bang!

“All right!” I snarled. “You made your point. So, stop!”

I opened the door quickly enough to catch his insistent fist in the act.

“Hi, Willie!” came the cheerful greeting from my tormentor.

I blinked, cleared the haze, and saw Jimmy.

"Deaner!" I croaked. "Deaner, what're you doing here?"

"Eating watermelon," he said. "Can I come in?"

"No, I thought we'd talk here in the hall." I pulled him in and shut the door. "When'd you get in?"

"Late last night," he answered anxiously. "Get your clothes on. Let's get some coffee."

While I revived myself with some black brew in a neighborhood ham-and-egger, Jimmy reviewed the events of the preceding months in New York. I strained at my disjointed brain to maintain the maximum degree of mental coordination, as he told me the story behind *The Immoralist* and the events that led up to the signing of the contract with Warner Brothers.

"Directed by Kazan!" I exclaimed. "What's the picture? What kind of part?"

"It's Steinbeck's *East of Eden*" he said simply. "I guess it's just about the leading role."

"Wow, man! A starring role in your first picture! That's the end."

"A lead," he insisted firmly.

He rushed me through my second cup of coffee, explaining that we had a lot to accomplish in a short time. We drove out to Beverly Hills, where he rented a Ford convertible, using most of the money that had been advanced him. And within less than an hour, we were packed and on our way down the Hollywood Freeway, headed for the desert.

"Why the desert?" I asked, once we were on our way. "Gadge—Kazan, I mean—wants me to get a tan," he explained. "The part's a kid who lives in a farming community near Salinas. I've got to put on some weight, too. That's why I came out here before we start filming."

I suggested that he might prefer a special little desert retreat of mine, Borrego Springs, about a hundred miles beyond Palm Springs.

"Sounds great," he agreed. "Palm Springs is too commercial, anyway. Don't want to run into all kinds of people."

With the top down, to derive full benefit from the warm sun, we sped along the superior Southern California highways toward our destination, chatting about old friends, old times, and the future.

I couldn't recall ever seeing Jimmy in such serenely high spirits. He was cheerful and confident, though not overly, and clear in his thinking about the picture and his attitude toward Hollywood.

"They gave me a lot of guff out here last time. They're not going to do it again. This time I'm going to make sure of it." Starting out in Hollywood, Jimmy, like many other young hopefuls, had suffered too many indignities while going through the accepted methods of breaking into movies. Too many doors had been slammed in his face. Too many casting directors and agents had treated him without interest and, according to his own standards, disrespect. Too many unpleasant people in positions of influence and authority had demanded of him too much flattering attention. Too many ugly memories had stayed with him, like the incident when a female casting director who, meeting him for the first time in her office one day, had scrutinized him with her piercing eyes from all possible angles for several minutes, and then had quipped to his agent with a sneer, "My, isn't *she* pretty?"

Two years before he had not been wise enough, aware enough, confident enough, to know better than to play along with their degrading games. He had been a hopeful, naive, unaccomplished little boy who believed in those foolish prescribed methods for getting ahead in Hollywood, and who had jumped for all the would-be Caligulas. But he had grown a good deal during his two years in New York and he had returned to Hollywood much taller and much stronger.

"I just want to make this picture and get back to New York. I don't need Hollywood. Maybe they don't need me, either, but I've got the advantage. I've got something they want, and they're going to have to pay to get it."

But talent was all he intended to sell them. He had established too many rigid standards and values to give them anything more. He would have no truck with the dishonest nonsense so prevalent in Glamorville. There would be no great publicity campaign for James Dean, no star-studded crown to wear as a false laurel wreath, no blind acceptance of shallow standards, no falling into the trap of believing that stardom brought with it fulfillment and completion. His aim had been for a long time higher than Hollywood, and he didn't mean to lose sight of his ultimate goals. He had a long way to go and a lot to learn before his day of arrival. But along the way, he *would not permit Hollywood to bury him in the permanent grave of stagnation as it had done to so many before him. Hollywood would have to accept him on his terms, or not accept him at all. About this he was adamant.*

We stopped to gas up and bought a cooling soft drink. Jimmy sat down on the concrete step in the doorway of the gas station and stared off over the glaring desert sand. For a few minutes his expression was serious and set. Then, he chuckled sardonically into his bottle of Coke and said, "Gadge thinks I could win an Oscar for this role."

He chuckled again. "Well, go ahead, Willie," he urged, "laugh!"

In our younger, more critical days, we had often joked about the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and their yearly Oscar presentations, considering them chauvinistic, heavily influenced by studio prejudices and politics, too often ruled by saccharine sentimentality, and generally lacking the objectivity so necessary in criticizing art. In those younger years, we had decided that, should

they ever point their finger at us, we would refuse the award, considering it an insult to our integrity as artists to be included in such a farce and a sign of hypocrisy to compromise, for the sake of harmony and good will, by accepting. Those days were gone, and, along with them, those attitudes.

"Of course you're going to refuse it, if you win?" I assumed facetiously.

"Uh," Jimmy grunted, and got back into the car.

We roared about a mile down the burning desert road before he spoke again. "They'll hate my guts. I'd never win, unless I was so good they couldn't ignore me. Sure, I'd accept it. It's a great honor, no matter how you look at it. But they'll never vote me an Oscar, unless they're forced to."

"Forced to?" I asked, unable to imagine what could force the Academy members to do anything they, as individuals, didn't want to do.

Jimmy slammed on the brakes and came to a screeching halt on the highway. He jumped out of the car and rushed around to the front. Stooping, he gently picked up a small bird which was lying, wounded, in the road. Tenderly he stroked the bleeding creature, cooing to it, like a heartsick mother over an ailing child. After a while, the delicate thing stopped trembling and died in his hands. He buried it in the sand beside the road and remained silent for the rest of the drive.

The death of a bird is a strangely sad affair. That a thing so free, so independent, so lovely, should cease to exist seems unfair. The death of an earthbound thing, a creature shackled by the laws of gravity and conformity, seems less sad, since in that death may come a liberation from all that held it down. But the death of a thing that soared so high, a thing we could not touch, a thing of undefinable beauty and infinite mystery, seemed somehow sadder.

Immediately upon our return from the desert, we went to the offices of Famous Artists, the West Coast agency that was to handle Jimmy's affairs for Jane Deacy. Unshaved and shabbily dressed, we were led into Dick Clayton's office. Dick was the young agent who had been selected to manage the problem child from New York and, judging from his coolness and lack of reaction to our appearance, he had obviously been braced for the arrival of his new client.

Clayton appeared to be a charming man with an easy manner for handling temperaments. It was plain to see he figured he was confronted with a most special problem, but he succeeded in manipulating the first few minutes smoothly and without incident.

Jimmy, on the other hand, had had over a week to brood about the Hollywood situation. It was obvious that Dick, being his first contact with the town that was a potential threat to him, was due to get the brunt of Jimmy's defensive attitude.

During the first half hour of the meeting, they discussed plans for the picture, an advance from the studio for Jimmy, the problem of an apartment, and the need of a car. Jimmy did nothing to ease Dick's strain, but he found it difficult, in spite of his obvious efforts, to circumvent Dick's warm and friendly personality, to catch him off guard for one moment so that he could summon forth all his vitriol and spew some out at the soft-spoken agent. He squirmed in his seat, and he scratched himself, he put his feet on the desk, he grunted, and he picked his teeth. But Clayton refused to give in to his game.

"Dick, where in the name of— Where's that secretary?" boomed the voice of another agent from the outer office. A huge man stormed into Dick's office and bellowed more about the inefficiency of someone's secretary. He had come to the wrong place at the wrong time.

“Just get out of here,” instructed Jimmy softly, cutting the man in the middle of a sentence. v “Who’s the punk?” the man said to Dick.

Dick laughed uncomfortably and introduced them.

“You know, you’re pretty rude,” Jimmy reprimanded the intruder. “You come in here, braying like an ass, when we’re in the middle of a conference. Haven’t you got any manners?”

At first, the forceful soul-seller was defensive, but within a matter of minutes he changed his tack. I couldn’t tell if it was through some subtle cue from Clayton, or simply the man’s own intuitive powers, but he soon began to draw Jimmy out by asking him about his picture, his interest in the theater, motorcycles, and several other of Jimmy’s favorite topics. By the time he left the office, he had put Jimmy into a fairly congenial, conversational mood.

Dick and Jimmy concluded their business, and we left the office. Something was troubling Jimmy.

“That loud-mouthed slob?” he reminded me. “Four years ago he gave me a hard time on an interview here.”

His anticipation of a clash, his opportunity to lash out and let the town know his intentions, had been frustrated.

“Clayton’s a nice guy. I guess I’ve got him worried,” he said, once we were outside.

“I guess you have,” I agreed, and looked the other way.

Although his first skirmish with Hollywood had been a fizzle, I could tell by his attitude that Jimmy intended to keep his guard high, since there was no telling what lay ahead.

The following day we met Kazan on a stairway and went with him to his office at Warner Brothers. For a while Kazan and Jimmy joked and kidded about everything in general. Gadge was pleased to see the fine tan Jimmy had picked up

on the desert, but felt he should put on more weight. There was a warm, easy harmony between the seasoned artist and his younger disciple. I saw no evidence of the usual director-actor relationship, but felt, instead, that they were simply old friends.

When it came time for serious words on the picture, they went into a huddle and discussed their plans in muffled tones. Kazan had created a strong feeling of intimacy and exclusivity in his relationship with Jimmy, keeping their exchange esoteric at all times.

As we were leaving the front office at Warners, we ran into Paul Newman, who was also leaving the building. Paul and Jimmy were surprised to see one another, and after an actor-type reunion we all went across the street to the drugstore for something to eat.

"What are you doing here? I thought I left you in New York," Jimmy said. "You didn't mention anything about coming out here."

"You know, you're a lucky devil," complained Newman. "I wanted that part in *Eden* so bad I could taste it." Then he turned to me: "Bill, so help me, every time I went to read for a

part in New York this clown would be there. Got so's I couldn't turn around without seeing him."

"Haunting him," Jimmy chuckled.

"I'm not kidding," insisted Newman. "Just like the Bobbsey Twins; every place I went, he went. He shadowed me to every producer's office in New York. He even showed up for *Oklahoma* and got a test."

"I didn't tell you," Jimmy explained to me. "I tested for the part of Curly in *Oklahoma*—even took singing lessons. It would have been a kick."

"Hey, man," he directed at Newman, "I still don't dig it. What're you doing out here?"

"I'm testing for *The Silver Chalice*," said Newman, apologetically. "A real dog."

He flung the fat script across the table at us. Jimmy thumbed through it, reading some of the impossible lines at random.

"What're you going to do with stuff like that?" wondered Newman. "I didn't want to come back here. I mean, who needs this hole?"

"Then why are you here?" I asked.

"The wife, kids, all that jazz. Money is attractive stuff, and they're made of it out here. You'd have to be a jerk to pass it up. Man, am I confused right about now! I don't know whether to send for my wife, or what. I don't want to stick around here after the picture, but then, who knows what else might come up? I don't know if it's worth it, staying here. They've sure got me spinning."

Jimmy explained his views on the Hollywood subject, which must have made Newman feel like a fourth-rate idiot for even thinking of coming to the town.

Together they discussed the actor's plight: the old story of Hollywood *versus* Broadway. Should a legitimate actor allow himself to be lured away from the more perfect outlet for his expression, the Broadway theater, by taking the tantalizing offers made by Hollywood? Should an actor let all his artistic principles go down the drain because of an easy buck? Or can he cling to his high standards, maintain his artistic integrity in this commercial world? After all, couldn't Broadway itself be accused of being only a little less commercial than Hollywood at times?

"It's a rough business," Newman mused. "You figure out what you really want and you go after it. If you're lucky, you make it. But when you get there, they do everything they can to get you off the track. That's only if you're lucky—like you, Jim. If you don't get the breaks, I mean, if someone doesn't give you a shove, you never make it. You just can't get there on your own hook."

"Nuts!" said Jimmy.

"What do you mean?" challenged Newman. "You know there isn't a single guy in this whole lousy business who made it by himself. Anyone who ever made more than ten bucks at acting made it because somebody helped him."

"That's not true!" insisted Jimmy, more defiantly than the mood of the conversation required.

"Come off it, Dean," persisted Newman. "You can't tell me no one helped you. Don't try to tell me no one ever made things a little easier for you."

"That's right!" flared Jimmy. "You're right!"

"Aw, Deaner," I injected. "Not even someone who gave you an introduction to just the right guy? I mean, let's be honest. We all got help somewhere along the line. That's the way it's done."

"It is *not*!" he shouted. "No one ever did anything for me. I did it myself. I don't owe anything to anyone! Not one stinking penny!" And he beat his fist on the table to emphasize the point. "I don't owe anything to anyone!"

There was an uncomfortable silence. Jimmy sat trembling, fury burning in his veins. After a few moments, Newman tactfully changed the subject, and the incident was dismissed.

Although I knew Jimmy to be strong on the subject of his indebtedness, I had never before seen him become so violent about it. He was honestly aware that several people had extended him help and guidance in the form of contacts and introductions and, occasionally, money, but he had always felt that they had done it only because they wanted to, not because he asked for it. They had been gifts and favors offered without request, and he owed nothing but thanks for them. He had always insisted upon receiving without any obligation to return, and it riled him when his benefactors would try to extort from him something in return. If they wanted something from him, if anyone wanted something from him, he wanted him to come as a friend and ask, but not suddenly to thrust upon him an

obligation he was not aware of, a responsibility he had not asked for. Among his close friends he had long had a reputation for being generous and thoughtful. But he was also known to be selfish and cold, whenever he was put on the spot by someone expecting something in return for what he had considered a friendly gesture.

We left Newman to join Dick Clayton in quest of a suitable apartment for us to share. Clayton had done considerable calling and inquiring and had come up with several possibilities. Unfortunately, none of them was suitable, being either too small, or badly located.

Several days later Jimmy decided to share an apartment across from Warner Brothers with Dick Davalos, who was also in *Eden*. The arrangement seemed more convenient and advisable for him, so I stayed on where I was.

Dick Clayton proved to be a fine friend and attentive agent. He saw to it that Jimmy's needs and most of his whims were gratified. Through him, Jimmy was introduced to several young starlets whom he began dating. After a comparatively short time, Jimmy could be seen whizzing around town in his new MG, another luxury Clayton had provided for him, with Terry Moore, or any number of other sparkling starlets.

For a while it had seemed as though Hollywood was an entirely new place to Jimmy. There were few, if any, old friends to look up, and no old ties to re-establish. He had floundered at first, meeting new people and adjusting to a new life. But with the help of his bright red sports car and his glamorous dates, he gradually began finding his way around Hollywood again.

For a time before the picture started, he spread out and enjoyed himself in a truly Hollywood style, as if he were ridding himself, in as short a time as possible, of the natural desire to sop up some of the old, and once unattainable, superficial glitter of the film capital. But by the time *Eden*

was ready to roll, he had had it and was ready to settle down to the serious task of creating a character.

One Sunday afternoon in May, I was completely absorbed in the writing of a new television play on which I was collaborating with another writer, Ted Hartman, when a knock came at the front door. It was Jimmy. I asked him in and explained abruptly that we were working, but that I would be through in about an hour, if he cared to wait.

"Yeah," he agreed. "I'll just sit here and listen to some of your records."

I went back to work, but after only a few minutes, Jimmy sauntered into the room and began making suggestions, not even aware of the story or characters involved in the script. It puzzled me that he would intrude like that. He was conscious enough of the problems of writing to know that any interruption would make our work more difficult. As tactfully as possible, I got him to return to the records.

We went back to work, but I was aware of the depressing strains of Vivaldi's *L'estro Harmonico* in the background. The selection clearly indicated Jimmy's state of mind at the time.

"I'm going to cut out," he announced after another fifteen-minute interval. "I've got to see somebody."

He left as abruptly as he had come. It bothered me, realizing that he had probably wanted to talk with me about something. But the situation had been out of my hands, and he had chosen to leave before I was free. I tried very hard to concentrate on the work, but the feeling that there was something wrong persisted.

Anxiously searching for a line, I walked over to the window and looked down into the street below. I was startled to see Jimmy still sitting in his little MG parked right outside. Puzzled, I watched him for a few minutes as he sat quietly gazing at nothing in particular.

Suddenly my heart sank. His reason for showing up, his peculiar state of mind, his abrupt departure, and his fabricated reason for leaving all made sense.

I ran from the apartment, down the stairs, and rushed through the door. As I ran out onto the sidewalk, I saw the MG sputter off down the street. I called to him, but he was gone.

Why hadn't I figured it sooner? Why had I forgotten it was Mother's Day?

"Say, Deaner," I asked one night over dinner in an Italian restaurant. "What's all this about Pier Angeli?"

"Nothing complicated," he answered. "Just a nice girl, for a change. I mean, you know, I can talk to her. She understands.

Nothing messy, just an easy kind of friendly thing. I respect her."

"Serious?" I asked.

"Aw, cut it, Willie," he said. "You've been reading too many gossip columns."

"You leveling with me?" I asked, putting him on a spot. "Sure, sure," he insisted. "She's an untouchable. We're members of totally different castes. You know, she's the kind you put on a shelf and look at. Anyway, her old lady doesn't dig me. Can't say I blame her."

There was something in his manner of underplaying the subject that indicated a deeper attachment than he wanted to admit. About most matters I knew Jimmy could be flip, but about matters that were essential I knew him often to be shy and guarded. He had a way of clamming up if anyone asked him direct questions about something that was really important to him. On the other hand, if you neglected to ask him about something that really had him excited, he would eventually lose patience and confide in you, like a child bursting with a special secret.

The lovely young Pier had wandered onto the set of *Eden* one day and had immediately captured his attention with her serene beauty and delicate grace. She was from a staunch old Italian family and had been sheltered from the coarse outside world, even after she had arrived at the supposedly sophisticated level of stardom. Jimmy was charmed by her warmth, her loveliness, and her intelligence. But her mother, a woman guided by a protective nature and long-set dreams of her daughter's future, made it clear that she intended to sever the gentle love from the moment she became aware of it.

At the start, the pair was successful in circumventing the restrictions that had been placed on them. In an effort to be together, despite Pier's mother's instructions that she did not want her daughter dating the wild young man, they began showing up at parties and gatherings, arriving separately and departing individually. Only in those few moments between were they in any way together. But, after a time, the situation became intolerable and the emotional demands too great.

Finally, when Jimmy learned that Pier had rejected him in favor of Vic Damone, the popular singer, he was thrown into a state of depression. Although he had tried to keep his true feelings well guarded, a closely personal matter, he had been unable to keep them from himself. He was too human to avoid the hurt that came of rejection. All he knew was that the relief of love had been denied him once again, leaving him with the ever-present, seldom-quieted compulsion to fulfill the undefined obligation that haunted him.

Around Hollywood, rumor had it that, on the day Pier married, Jimmy sat on his motorcycle across from the church and cried. In any case, he was deeply hurt and terribly disappointed. In his persistent efforts to partake of all emotions to the fullest, when he loved, he allowed

himself to love completely, and when he lost the object of his love, he allowed himself to suffer completely.

A while before he left New York, Jimmy had met and befriended a young composer named Leonard Rosenman. When he departed for California, he turned over his city apartment to Rosenman so that the composer could work and study without the disturbing worry over living quarters.

Like so many of his stimulating friends, the talented musician had made a remarkable impression on Jimmy. Together they had found a rapport in the music which was so much a part of Rosenman's existence. Rosenman's energetic musical mind was a great source of inspiration to Jimmy, and he set to sapping as much as he could, delving deeper into the realm of modern music, a field in which Rosenman was blossoming.

It was from Rosenman that he picked up the story, which became his favorite, about the late Arnold Schonberg, one of the world's greatest, and still most controversial modern composers. Jimmy took special delight in telling the tale to anyone who would take the time to listen, perhaps because it represented to him the significance of the problems of the few great artists who suffer the curse of being ahead of their times.

"You see," he would begin, accentuating with appropriate animation, "Schonberg had just composed his famous violin concerto, and one of the world's foremost violinists was going to introduce it. The music was very difficult, and one day at rehearsal the great violinist complained to Schonberg, 'Mr. Schonberg, your music is indeed magnificent, but it is impossible to play. To be honest, a violinist would have to have six fingers on his left hand to play it properly.' To which the mild but intense Schonberg replied modestly, 'I'll wait.'"

Jimmy's enthusiasm for Rosenman's talents was so strong that he became involved in plans to direct the opera which Serge Koussevitsky had commissioned the composer to

write at the summer music festival in Tanglewood, Mass., where the Boston Symphony spends the summer months. But the plans were in the future, and that was too far off for Jimmy. Instead, he urged Kazan to let Rosenman write the background music for *Eden*. Successful, Jimmy summoned his friend to join him in California.

On the set one day, Rosenman introduced Jimmy to a relative of his, Lew Bracker, an ambitious young insurance agent who was interested in selling Jimmy a policy. Jimmy had not as yet recovered from the pain of losing Pier, and when he discovered that Bracker, too, was suffering from a recently soured romance, he began seeking the insurance man's company in his misery. The two became further bound by their mutual interest in sports cars and found comfort and diversion in the pursuit of their fascinating and exciting hobby.

By the time *Eden* was completed, word started to seep out that Warner Brothers had a great new star in James Dean. The studio screenings and audience previews were drawing the best reactions, and it was becoming a matter of excitement around town.

Late one afternoon my telephone rang.

"Ah, Willie," mumbled Jimmy, "*Eden* is previewing tonight, if you want to see it."

"I'll be there," I promised.

Months before, he had asked me not to read Steinbeck's novel, but to wait until I had seen the picture. He had even insisted that I wait out the long process of editing the film, before allowing me to see any portion of it. As the months had gone by and the rumors of his impressive performance became abundant, my curiosity began to get out of control. Now, at last, it was time for me to see what I had waited so many years to see, Jimmy's first notable triumph.

Although I arrived early, the theater was already crowded. No matter how hushed sneak previews are kept by the studios, word somehow manages to get around town, and

the people from the motion picture industry pack the theater, on hand to see the latest offering and to judge with their professional eyes whether or not it is deserving of attention. This, unfortunately, renders the preview literally valueless to the producer, since the main purpose of a sneak preview is to get the reactions of an impartial, average movie audience.

Inside the buzzing theater lobby, I stopped to talk to Jimmy for a moment. He was genuinely nervous. When he asked me to sit with him, I declined, realizing that it would be very difficult for me to sit beside him during the showing of the film. He understood and said he would talk to me afterward.

In the last minutes before the picture began, I searched myself for my true sentiments at the moment. In all the years of striving, struggling, putting all our hopes into what we were trying to accomplish, sacrificing almost everything to succeed, I had come to identify myself with Jimmy's occasional successes, and Jimmy had sometimes identified himself with my little successes. When things were rough, and our goals had seemed the furthest from realization, it had been sometimes possible to reaffirm the hope and resummon the courage to carry on by such methods of identification. Now, as I waited for the film to begin, the hopes and dreams of all the past years soared in me and stretched their tired, hungry little hands out for alms and balms.

Then, with a blast of music that seemed to emanate from within my head, and a splash of color that stretched from one end of my vision to the other, the picture burst forth on the screen, bigger and more undeniable than anything I had expected.

When it ended, I was shattered. Not only had I seen the irrefutable proof that Jimmy had achieved a degree of greatness in his acting, not only had I seen that success was possible, not only had I watched a film that was masterfully

directed and powerfully acted, but I had also watched my friend live, in a relatively similar story, the unfortunate reality of his own emotional existence. I watched him, driven by the overwhelming need to gain the love of his father and those around him, striving desperately to disprove his inbred belief that he was bad because of his mother. There was so much of Jimmy in that film, so much of the young man I had known for so long and had grown to love as a friend, so much of the lost, tormented, searching, gentle, enthusiastic little boy; so much of the bitter, self-abusive, testing, vengeful monster. And it had all been rolled up into one brief hour and a half and thrown at me with the impact of Cinemascope and stereophonic sound. And when my ears were filled with the thunder of applause from the audience, I felt myself slipping. More grateful than I had ever been, I bent forward in my seat and bawled, like a Jew of old seeing the Promised Land for the first time.

By the time I worked my way through the crowd into the lobby, Jimmy had gone. In fact, I was informed, he had left well before the picture ended. I went home and waited for his call. I knew it would come, probably around three in the morning, and I knew I wouldn't have to say much to make him understand how I felt about the picture.

After that night, Hollywood was constantly abuzz with the name of James Dean. Jimmy seemed to feel the ominous foreboding of the sensational fame that was to come out of his first film. So, since Jane Deacy had arranged for him to do some television work in New York, he snatched at the chance to leave town. He hoped to maintain a degree of objectivity and rationality about the situation by getting away from Hollywood, a place where one can too easily begin to believe what one hears and reads about himself.

In New York Jimmy touched once again the fibers of those things that were really important to him. With renewed fervor, he began to study again—interpretive dance, modern

dance, bongo drums, photography—while he was doing occasional roles for television. But, because he still feared what the super-self-analytical techniques employed by the Actors Studio might do to him, he only audited classes, usually sitting in the rear of the room, sketching the proceedings. He was happy again in New York and he was devouring it like a man who hadn't eaten for a long time.

Like the Prodigal Son, he sought out his family of friends. There were late, long talks with Marty Landau and Billy Gunn, photography lessons with Roy Schatt, discussions and reminiscences with Rusty Slocum and Barbara Glenn. With warm hearts and outstretched hands they all welcomed him, for he was home once more.

Due to contract stipulations, he was not free to stay in New York to do a Broadway play, as he wished, but was being held by the studio for more picture work. So, while in New York, he tried to absorb enough of the creative atmosphere from which he, as an artist, had emerged to last him through the trying days ahead in Hollywood. He was determined, at least, to return to New York after each picture in order to reaffirm himself.

"Jimmy, I've never interfered with your life in any way," began Jane Deacy one afternoon as they were walking down the street. "You made it pretty clear to me that that wouldn't go, right from the beginning. But, I don't mind telling you, I just don't like all this stuff about Marlon Brando. These comparisons of your actions with Brando's have got to stop. You know perfectly well they're right. Now, I know Marlon has been an inspiration to you for a long time, but it's no good. It might be just the matter of a movement here, a gesture there, or whatever, but you've got to stop it. In the first place, you certainly don't need anything anyone else has. You've got enough talent of your own. I know it isn't intentional; you come from the same school of acting and you've got similar backgrounds. But it still has to stop. It isn't good."

Jimmy boiled and exploded. He swore at her violently, and ended with, "Don't you think I'm aware of it?"

Jane dropped the subject, knowing that his awareness was all the assurance she needed.

For a long time Jimmy had been conscious of the comparisons and he had tried to find out if they had any degree of validity. Perhaps at the beginning he had been influenced by Brando and the Actors Studio, but he had begun to feel that he was growing out of all that. He felt that, given time, he would emerge as an actor with his own definite style, independent of and entirely different from any other actor, including Brando.

Was it his fault, he reasoned, that people had such limited imaginations that they were compelled to identify every new face with another older, more established personality?

As the day of the spectacular New York premiere of *East of Eden* approached, Jimmy became restless and ill at ease. The premiere had been set up as a benefit for the Actors Studio and would be the same type of gala affair to which Hollywood was accustomed. He had been to a few of those premieres before and he knew what they were like. He knew there would be throngs of people lined up at the curbs, and mobs seated in the bleachers beside the theater entrance, all screeching and screaming as the stars got out of their shiny studio-provided limousines. He knew there would be radio and television interviews with gushy announcers. He knew the most important people in the theater world and the top brass of the motion picture industry would be well represented. He knew there would be enthusiastic wishes for his success before the film, and hundreds of glowing compliments after the film. All this he knew, and it bothered him.

Could he be expected to conduct himself as they would wish? Could he go through, as so many thousands of stars who had preceded him throughout motion picture history had been forced to, an entire evening of interviews and

close contact with the public and the giddy society of the movie world without faltering, without stumbling and, perhaps, falling? If, as everyone had predicted, the picture was a great success and he was accepted enthusiastically, was he prepared to handle the awesome problem of facing all those people with composure and grace? Could he risk making that inevitable mistake?

"I'm sorry, Mom," he apologized to Jane Deacy over the phone one day just before the premiere. "But you know I can't make this scene. I can't handle it. So I'm going back to the Coast tonight."

East of Eden opened in New York without Jimmy's presence. The picture was received as a glowing triumph for the unusual Kazan discovery, James Dean. The comments were strong and definite, ranging from "just another Brando" to "completely unique," and the process of myth-making got under way immediately. They knew they had found someone new, someone worthy of attention, another freak, another controversial personality whom they could analyze and deprecate, on whom they could bestow all their superlatives, and through whom they could find renewed vicarious excitement in their too-often narrow little world of celluloid. But, unknown to all, something more than a star had been born.

IV

“My gods dwell in temples made with hands; and within the circle of actual experience is my creed made perfect and complete: too complete, it may be, for like many or all of those who have placed their heaven in this earth, I have found in it not merely the beauty of heaven, but the horror of hell also.”

Oscar Wilde—*De Profundis*

Back in Hollywood to start preparations for his next picture, *Rebel Without a Cause*, Jimmy bumped around, trying to adjust to the steadily mushrooming popularity that had begun immediately upon the release of *Eden*. He was determined that he would not allow the notoriety to interfere with his established standards and his personal life. He realized that he would have to remain aloof from the situation, divorcing James Dean, the personage, from James Dean, the person. But his problem become one of how to manage it.

It was not totally in a spirit of rebellion that he avoided the studio publicity men, but partly in an effort to avoid the deluge of publicity that would naturally come as a result of his co-operation. It was not merely an anti social attitude that kept him from participating actively in Hollywood social life, but more an effort to avoid the superfluous gossip-column publicity that would result from so much contact with a rumor- happy town. Perhaps he felt that if he could avoid all the undesirable publicity, he could establish for himself a reputation of prestige and his own style of dignity, without becoming the “movie idol,” a role he definitely had no desire to play. His only concern was to be allowed to work and live in his own style, and according to his own values.

But in a town so long dedicated to the proposition that publicity is necessary and obligatory for all stars, his attitude was not well received. Gradually he gained the disfavor of the press, calling forth such uncomplimentary items in the columns as, "James Dean bought himself a new suit the other day. Who does he think he is—Marlon Brando?" When the press began its relentless, sometimes cruel, onslaught, the Warner Brothers' publicity people were forced to do all they could to protect Jimmy. Since they, themselves, were not exactly partial to him because of his lack of co-operation during the filming of *Eden*, they were put in the peculiar position of having to defend someone they did not particularly like.

Always able to remain the great spectator, Jimmy watched the farce as it grew and even seemed to enjoy seeing the complications he caused. He knew his reputation in Hollywood was not one of the best, but he didn't much care.

He had bought a new motorcycle and was proud of it, since it was by far the finest he had ever owned. He was a good cyclist and took pride in demonstrating the fact around town. Often he could be seen roaring down Sunset Strip in the direction of Googie's, a favorite restaurant with the young film actors.

Of course, Kazan and Warner Brothers had warned him to stay off the bike during the making of *Eden*. The studio's investment was too great to risk an accident which might delay filming for weeks or months at a tremendous cost. So he bought himself a horse, which he kept on a ranch near Santa Barbara, and tried to content himself with driving up the coast each week end to the ranch, where he could ride through the still-rugged California mountain country. But horseback riding was a poor substitute for the sensation of liberation that every motorcyclist knows and appreciates.

"You know, Willie," he mused one night, "ever since you've known me, I've wanted a motorcycle just like the one I've

got now. Kinda funny, isn't it? Now that I can afford it, they don't want me to ride it. Nuts to them."

Ella Logan developed a fear of Jimmy's craze for cycling soon after they met on the set of *Eden*. She was immediately drawn to the strange young man to whom her friend, Kazan, had introduced her. She admired in him all the dynamic force and sensitive beauty that so many others had misinterpreted as arrogance and an anti social attitude.

It was at one of the many impromptu parties at her home in Brentwood, where she often invited young artists like Jimmy, Sammy Davis, Jr., Nat King Cole, and Marlon Brando, that she asked Brando to speak to Jimmy about motorcycling.

As he was leaving the party, Brando turned to Jimmy and said in his hushed, confiding voice, "Jimmy, why don't you give up the motorcycle? It doesn't go. I found that out. You know, an actor with half a face is no actor at all. Forget it, why don't you?"

Jimmy listened, but shrugged off the advice. Ella feared the battle was lost, but a few days later Jimmy informed her that he had disposed of the bike because he felt it was too dangerous. For a time, Ella and most of his close friends were relieved.

Then, just before the start of *Rebel*, influenced by the mutual fascination in them he shared with Lew Bracker, Jimmy bought his first real sports car, a German-built Porsche.

I was puttering along Sunset Strip one night on my way home in the sluggish heap I called a car, when I heard the roar of a powerful motor behind me. As I came to a stop for a red light, a white Porsche screeched to a halt in the next lane.

"Willie!" Jimmy shouted, and indicated that I should pull to the curb.

He slid up beside me, raced his motor a few times, and beamed, "I just got it today."

“Deaner, it’s the end!” I gasped.

“It’s white, you know,” he pointed out. “Want a spin?”

I was in the car before he asked the question. He took off into the Hollywood hills, determined to give me the most convincing demonstration of my life. The Porsche, built for mountain driving, climbed the steep upgrade as though it were only a level highway, neatly hugging the road with each treacherous curve. It seemed within seconds we were zipping along Appian Way at the crest of the mountain, watching the glittering neon expanse below glide by. With precision and mastery, Jimmy guided the car swiftly down the sharply angular mountain drive, through the canyon pass, and back to the spot where I had left my car. It had all taken less than fifteen minutes, and we had probably covered ten mountainous miles.

Although I had never been queasy about excessive speed, I was not accustomed to speeding in someone else’s car. The fact that I was not in control made me uncomfortable and slightly nervous. Like many people, I usually left a deep imprint of my right foot on the floorboards where I had unconsciously applied imaginary brakes during speedy rides. But Jimmy’s confidence and his skill with the car were so complete that I had remained entirely at ease throughout the spin through the hills.

In Palm Springs, a few weeks later, he entered the car in his first sports car road races. On the first day he took first place in the amateur class. Then, on the second day, he took third place in the professional class.

The evening of the first race, a Saturday, I was spending with some friends, making the rounds of the night spots in California’s most glamorous desert retreat. As I was crossing the busy main street at about 2 a.m., I spotted Jimmy driving by in his station wagon. He honked and pulled into a filling station. I excused myself and walked over to his car.

"Hi, Willie," he grinned at me through bleary eyes. "Where're you going?"

He introduced me to the two stunning young girls beside him in the front seat.

"C'mon, get in," he said.

I hesitated a moment, torn between a loyalty to my friends who were waiting and the prospect of an interesting evening of adventure. Even if I got the worse of the two girls (and with Jimmy there I would), I'd be doing better than usual.

As I leaned in the window to get a better look at the temptresses, Jimmy came into better focus. He had been drinking heavily, something unusual for him, and the muscles in his face were limp. For a brief moment, he searched my face and seemed to be asking me something. Whatever he was trying to say, whatever that look meant, it depressed me. He seemed to be totally disassociated from everything that was going on around him, completely unaware of his surroundings—the girls, the car, even the town. I could not be sure, but he seemed to be asking me where he was.

"You wanna come?" he asked, implying, "please."

I hesitated again. I wasn't drunk. If I joined them, I would be forced to sit by, dead sober, and play the spectator, forced to watch him fall apart before my eyes. I wished I were drunk.

"Look, Deaner," I mumbled apologetically, "I can't. I've got some friends over there, waiting for me."

He narrowed his eyes, as if to make sure he was seeing me, and then he muttered from somewhere in the land of Inebria, "Yeah." His head bobbed in an uneven nod, and he repeated his disappointment: "Yeah."

I backed away from the car. With a jerk the car lurched out of the gas station, and I whispered half to myself, "Don't ask me, Deaner. I don't know where you are."

And as I walked back to join my waiting friends, I trembled. "Poor Jimmy."

After the first road races, Jimmy brought his trophies home to Hollywood and displayed them to all his friends with pride. It was apparent that sports cars were going to replace motorcycles in his life.

Most of his friends then realized that trying to make him give up sports cars would be as futile as making him give up motorcycles had been. Even if they were successful, there would be something else, equally dangerous, he would find to take the place of the ecstatic pleasure he derived from the sensation of speed, the exultation of rugged competition, and the emotional excitement of taunting death. His friends came to accept the fact that there was nothing they could do to change this in him. Perhaps, they reasoned hopefully, he would mature out of it eventually.

Once *Rebel* got under way, I watched Jimmy slip into a different way of life. It was not entirely unique, since in many ways it was like those days back in New York when he had sought life where it presented itself most dramatically. But, unlike the days in New York, this time Jimmy seemed to want to become completely involved, instead of remaining the objective student of life, instead of remaining the participating spectator.

At first I reasoned that perhaps it was the role he was playing in *Rebel* that made him seek the unwholesome existence. Perhaps the mental unrest of the characters in the story made him want to re-experience the feeling of being lost, unwanted, and different from the norm. But then I began to feel that, this time, it was not so much a matter of study and research as it was a definite and strong feeling he had that he, too, belonged partly to that portion of humanity that is lost, alone, confused.

He had once said to Ella Logan, "I like you, Ella. You're good. But, you know, I like bad people, too. I guess that's

because I'm so curious to know what makes them bad."

By "bad" he hadn't meant precisely "evil." People with odd viewpoints and different modes of existence always fascinated him. It was more in a sense of "different" or "unusual" that he used the word "bad." At some point during his early Quaker upbringing he had learned to associate "bad" with those actions not considered to fit the normal and accepted patterns of conduct in our society. It was his own differentness, his own refusal to comply with those normal and accepted patterns, that so often led him to the conclusion that he, himself, was basically "bad."

A little after the witching hour one night, I sauntered into Googie's and spotted Jimmy seated in a booth with a good-looking girl. As I approached the booth, I could see that Jimmy was playing one of his weird-mood games, and I almost decided to avoid a scene I now considered slightly old and very tired. But before I could change my course, I was standing at their table. Creating the required effect, Jimmy was slouched deep in his seat, a burning cigarette dangling from his cracked lips. He wore his dirtiest pants, his leather motorcycle jacket, and a two-day growth of whiskers.

"Hi, Jimmy," I said.

With all the proper dramatic nuances, he squinted his eyes and peered over the top rim of his glasses at me. After an exceptionally long pause, he mumbled, "Hi, Willie." Then, letting his hand drop limply at the wrist in the girl's direction, he introduced her.

Having joined him in the game long before I came on the scene, the girl, eyes set in intense detachment, lifted the string of beads with which she had been toying, casually dipped it into the strawberry malt before her, tilted her head, slowly drew the beads between her sensuous lips, sucking them clean of their sweet coating, and said, "Hi," in a husky, dull voice.

I begged off the invitation to join them and left.

It bothered me to see Jimmy like that. It was neither new, nor flattering to him. The worst part about it was that it was the same game he had been playing for over two years. I was embarrassed by his lack of inventiveness; the game hadn't even developed any new twists, and it bored me.

Outside, I stood, inwardly boiling. Not until recently had I been so provoked to wrath over this absurd behavior. It had been amusing and fun at one time, but now there were too many, to suit my taste, who were beginning to believe in it. It was when they began taking themselves seriously that I had to bow out.

I had just concluded for myself that the pseudo-avant-gardists of the modern world were nothing more than history's greatest phonies. Only two weeks before that night, I had been subjected to a barrage of nonsense while viewing the latest art films from Paris at a local art film house. Existentialism, a grim but significant philosophy, had not been enough for them. Now the self-appointed geniuses of the modern world had gone a step beyond to a new psychic existence, and they called their cult Letterism. As far as I could divine, Letterism was a philosophy that vaguely defined the most disgusting and obviously absurd behavior as unique and self-expressive. It said, in essence, to wear one's overcoat inside-out is to be utterly unique. Normally, the only reaction I would have had at first would have been a puzzled scratch of my head and a "Well, yeah, sure, I guess." But the arrogant presumptuousness of the new cultists in setting themselves up as leaders of a supposedly substantial literary and artistic philosophy, which was basically leading us back to lunacy, idiocy, buffoonery, with a little of the methods of the Marquis de Sade thrown in, was not only an insult to my intelligence, but also to the intelligence of all of my contemporaries. If they wished, they could fall in line with the great intellectual hoax of our decade, but I was determined not to believe in the emperor's new clothes.

When I later explained my sentiments to Jimmy, he passed them off with, "Aw, Willie, don't get so riled. It's just for kicks. You know that."

So on it went, each night around midnight, the convening of the same group, to sit for hours, improvising variations of an old theme. And with a select few, Jimmy started what came to be called "The Night Watch." One of them was Maila Nurmi, famous for her Vampira role on television. Maila, an interesting off-beat personality, is a compassionate girl who understood his esoterism, a claim few could make, and she quickly penetrated the protective fortress that surrounded him.

In the cool, misty hours of early morning, life in Hollywood, as in many other places, assumes a weird but enticing perspective. When the flattening glare of the sun has left, night shadows give strange and intriguing form to life, molding it into an unreal thing, a compelling thing. The world becomes a place where lonely and frightened souls can be free and secure, having shut out the terrifying life of daytime, having left behind the fearful time when they must fit in and keep up. It is a place where misery is understood, but forgotten; where sorrow is inherent, but so commonly shared that it is accepted. It is an easier place to live, if you are afraid, or if you do not belong.

In this place Jimmy found it possible to identify himself, to situate that portion of him he knew to be totally unconventional. In the long process of completing himself, of allowing himself to fill out in every possible way, he had called forth from the depths of his own psyche the smallest traces of anything that might be there, the good and bad, the kind and cruel, the sadistic and masochistic, the wholesome and the sick, little sparks that each person has within him but frustrates in fear that they might burst into uncontrollable blazes. He had made, out of his minutest drives and compulsions, vivid and real personality attributes, experimenting with himself, as though he were

nothing more than a laboratory guinea pig. He had done this in order to increase his capacity to understand and interpret human behavior, a basic concept in his definition of the duties of the artist. But once he had created his Frankensteins out of the dormant little seeds within his subconscious, once he had given them substance, they became a significant part of his being, and he was forced to live with them, at least in part. Unfortunately, he had not mastered the technique of putting them all back into their boxes when not in use.

The thief, the atheist, the sadist, the murderer, the alcoholic, the paranoiac, the pervert, the drug addict, the prostitute, the panhandler, the heretic, the fanatic; he became them all—emotionally. And no matter how clinical his approach had been, when the emotions existed, he, as an individual, had to identify them. What better place than among their kind?

In the beginning, when he had been entirely unsure of himself, Jimmy had caused an undue amount of attention in Hollywood through his exasperating and often shocking behavior and expressions of rebellion, and he had begun to make enemies quickly and neatly. Hollywood, being a place that takes itself entirely too seriously, failed to see the humor of his antics. Indeed, the righteous formed legions to oppose any such attempt at belying the ancient Hollywood myth of Paradise for Everyman. And the publicity was scathing.

Then, by the time *Rebel* was almost completed and his fame had grown to a national scale, Jimmy began to quiet, but not abandon, his humorous derision of Hollywood, and started to respect the fact that the place was making out of him something more than he had anticipated. As his control grew, so did his stature. Soon the columnists were not as violent in their attacks. And when Hedda Hopper climbed aboard the Dean bandwagon, almost all was forgotten, and

almost all was overlooked. After all, Hopper had dubbed James Dean “a genius” and few chose to contradict her. There was room for forgiveness in Hollywood’s bosom, now that the boy wonder was behaving himself.

With a calculated plan of attack, Jimmy set to the challenge of snaring the juiciest role in the hottest picture being planned in Hollywood. Entirely aware of what he was doing, Jimmy began spending a good deal of time around the George Stevens production offices on the Warner Brothers lot, during those last days of shooting on *Rebel*. He knew that Stevens had Edna Ferber’s *Giant* next on his roster of impressive pictures and he coveted a certain role in the script, that of Jett Rink. Day after day, he would show up in the Stevens offices, jest with the secretaries and receptionists (a neat knack he had developed to perfection back in the door-knocking days in New York), joke and chat with Stevens himself, and generally make himself likably at home.

Of course, Stevens had been keeping an eye on the sensation of *East of Eden* and had, in reality, been seriously considering Jimmy for the Rink role. As a matter of fact, Stevens had been aware of him since he’d seen him on a live TV show from New York over a year before. So with his own motivations in mind, he indulged Jimmy’s presence, spending valuable time with him, discussing everything from photography to sports cars.

Finally, one day when the courtship was at its peak, Stevens handed the bulky *Giant* screenplay to Jimmy and told him to go home and read it.

With the enthusiasm of a nine-year-old, Jimmy bounced into the office the next day and breathlessly described his excitement over the script.

“I sure would like to get my teeth into the Jett Rink part,” he hinted, flipping his lashes to suggest that That-would-be-too- good-to-be-true.

"Do you think you could handle the age change?" asked Stevens. "After all, Rink ages to fifty or more in this."

Jimmy assured him he could manage the problem.

"All right," concluded Stevens. "The part's yours!"

With who—me? written on his face, Jimmy staggered from the shock. Then, thanking everyone in the Stevens organization, he proceeded to call Dick Clayton to inform him that the deal was set, as anticipated.

That evening, as I was entering a hamburger joint, I met Jimmy, who was just leaving.

"Hear you got the part in *Giant*, I said, as I walked him to the entrance of the parking lot next door, where his Porsche was parked.

"Yeah," he confirmed casually. "News sure travels."

"When do you start?" I asked.

"Right away," he complained.

"*Rebel* finished?"

"Not quite. Going to be starting on wardrobe and all that, while we're finishing up *Rebel*. They got me a real Texan so's I can lam to talk proper like," he chuckled. "Got to learn how to ride and rope, too."

"Sounds like kicks," I observed.

"Guess so," he agreed noncommittally.

A group of acquaintances sauntered up and intruded, so Jimmy suggested that I call him the following day.

Inside the hamburger joint, the usual crowd of late-nighters were rehashing the usual theories and complaints. I sat at the counter next to an attractive girl. As I waited for my coffee to come, I watched Jimmy through the extra-large plate-glass window. By now he was surrounded by eight or ten people. The conversation seemed to be in low, relaxed tones, typical of the unenthusiastic conversations that could be picked up around there at any hour. Just before the waitress brought my coffee, Jimmy broke from the group, nodded a goodbye sign to me, and hopped into his car. I turned and reached for the sugar.

"That's the greatest guy in this whole town," asserted the girl, who had been watching, too.

"You know him?" I asked.

"Yeah," she breathed. "Got to know him around here. You know, he's the only one of these creeps who's got any guts. He's the end!"

She swung her stool in my direction and lifted her skirt slightly. "You see this?" she asked, pointing to show she had a leg missing.

"Hey," I said. "I would have thought you had your legs crossed. How'd you lose it?"

"Accident," she said tersely. "Most everyone around this place hasn't the guts to mention it, much less ask about it. But, Jimmy—ha! The first night I met him, he asked me all about it. You know—how I lost it, when it happened, everything. I mean, I would've said a guy had guts if he'd asked me to show it to him. But you know what Jimmy wanted? He wanted to touch it.

"We went up to my place, and I let him feel it. Nobody's ever asked for that. He looked at it, like, he examined it, you know. Then, he touched it and asked me to tell him how it felt. He asked me all kinds of questions about it, and how it made me feel. We must've talked for hours, just about my leg. We even laughed about it. Then he left. That's all; he just got up and left.

"Now I see him around here all the time and we have kicks and talk a lot. But you know, nobody else around here's like him. Not one of them ever approached me like he did. He's got guts, that's what. And more than that, he's—you know, a real human being."

When I left the place, I stood outside the plate-glass window and stared for a minute at the girl, who was just swinging her way to the cashier's desk with the aid of her crutches. I wondered if she knew that Jimmy had been learning from her. I wondered, too, how much he had learned, and how deeply involved he had become with the

sorrow he had found. I wondered exactly what made her admire him, how his unorthodox actions had reached her so completely.

And as I walked home to forget about it, I wondered how much of a beating Jimmy could force himself to take. How much tragedy, how much misery, how much human suffering, how much ugliness and misfortune, how much reality could a man continue to identify himself with physically and emotionally, before he rebelled, or before he snapped completely?

Sanford Roth is an internationally respected photographer who has done photographic essays on many of the world's most famous artists and intellectuals, including Albert Einstein, Colette, Jean Cocteau, Picasso, Marc Chagall, and literally hundreds of others. In his profession, he is considered not merely a photographer, but an artist. In the eight short years from the time he switched his career to photography until he first met Jimmy, he and his wife, Beulah, had traveled over half of the earth, recording more of our life and times than most photographers have been able to record in twice the time.

Sandy had recently returned from Europe to start his assignment on *Giant*, when he encountered Jimmy for the first time. As he slipped around the set, getting shots of the cast in action, he noticed that Jimmy kept on him the same suspicious, wary eye that he kept on the Warner Brothers publicity people. Studying Jimmy at close range, Sandy began to see in him the same qualities, though not yet fully developed, that he had come to know in so many of the artists with whom he had worked.

For several days Sandy watched the boy at work and in his relationships with the other people on the set. Then, compelled by curiosity and a sincere desire to get closer to Jimmy, he approached him.

"Look, Jim," he said, "I want to be your friend. That's all I want from you. You see, I don't need you for anything else. In my own right, I'm an artist of some repute, and a man of sufficient means. There's nothing you can do for me; nothing I can take away from you. I admire your talent and I respect your way of thinking. I just like you. That's the only reason I'd like to be your friend."

The directness of Sandy's approach so appealed to Jimmy that he opened himself almost immediately, and it was not long before both Sandy and his wife came to occupy a prominent position in Jimmy's life.

When Jimmy found in the Roths a source of intellectual stimulation and growth, he developed a great practical need for them; and when he discovered in them a source of love and comradeship as well, he developed a great psychological need for them.

The Roths are people in their middle years, but their lives are so filled with work and growth that they have a perpetual youth about them. In their infinite interest in everything that is life, they have found an astounding degree of happiness and contentment. They understood Jimmy's insatiable curiosity and desire for knowledge, and they offered him what they had.

So, coupling his practice of sapping the minds of his friends with his natural need for the love the childless Roths were affording him, he began seeking them out. Unexpectedly, he would drop in at their home, raid their refrigerator, play with Louis, their Siamese cat, and become involved in long, late discussions with Sandy and Beulah, who have an abundance of enthusiasm for discussions. There were descriptive talks on the Europe of today, introductions to the newest European writers and literati, pointers in photography, analyses of Jimmy's personal problems, friendly chats about the future, all with a constant undercurrent of wholesome, healthy progress.

In the Roths Jimmy was finding the kind of family he needed: a family of youthful, stimulating minds that would not make of him any unnecessary demands, and who would unflinchingly give to him of all their love. His only obligation to the Roths was fulfilled naturally as a result of the love he had for them.

His association with the Roths kept him on his intellectual toes. The process of growing constantly, relentlessly, can be a terribly demanding one. Jimmy had, like most people, a natural tendency to forget, to lie back and let some of it slip by, to skim over the surface and “fake it” the rest of the way. But, unlike most people, he also had a pressing obligation, and he knew he could not afford to let anything slip by. Consequently, he was grateful to anyone who would assist him in his drive to apply himself to the limit of his endurance. It made his job easier, and took the impossible requirements off his limited amount of self-discipline.

It didn't take the Roths long to discover the areas where Jimmy lacked the most. And in a helpful, constructive spirit, they guided him toward filling those gaps.

Using his alerted mind to even greater advantage, he began experimenting with photography on the set of *Giant*. Carefully, he watched Sandy at work, catching the off-guard shots that made the photographer famous. His respect for Sandy was so great that he began referring to him as “that sneaky eye.” When he expressed a desire to try his luck, Sandy turned the camera over to him and told him to shoot away.

His interest in photography didn't stop with still shots. With his quick, hungry eyes, he absorbed the techniques of the motion picture camera, asking questions whenever possible.

Since he had long before decided to broaden his scope of activity and accomplishments, he had taken to the habit of making notes on the methods and art of directing. During

Eden, he had observed Kazan; during *Rebel*, Nick Ray; and, now, during *Giant*, the movie master, Stevens.

And the pattern of study resumed. Literature, art, photography, acting, directing, music, people, life, death, anything, and everything.

"What's it like, working with Stevens?" I asked him one night.

"I hate pictures," he answered. "Stevens is no better than the others. Only he can't go wrong. Do you know he gets more footage—more film—than anybody else at Warner Brothers?"

"I get sick watching this junk, you know? They show up at the beginning of a day's shooting without any real plan. Somehow, they sort of muddle through. Stevens's got a method I call the 'round the clock' system. He takes all that film and shoots every scene from every possible angle—all around the scene, up, down, here, there—and when he's through, he gets himself the best editor in town. Then they spend a year, sometimes more, selecting from miles and miles of film the best shots and the best scenes. They figure the whole thing out like a jigsaw puzzle. And when they're through, surprise!—another masterpiece. How can he go wrong?"

The more he learned about the cleverness of motion picture filming techniques, the more he began resenting the general lack of the use of true creativity. And the more he became aware of the mechanics of Stevens* approach, the more he began resenting the man.

While *Giant* was on location in Marfa, Texas, Jimmy caused Stevens some concern. Instead of retiring after a full day's shooting, Jimmy would take off alone or with Bob Hinkle, the Texan who had been assigned the job of teaching Jimmy to be a real Lone Star son, and would head for the jack-rabbit country. He would spend the entire night shooting rabbits and return in the morning, exhausted, to start shooting the picture. In order to obtain the fullest amount

of motherly sympathy and attention from the women of the cast, Jimmy used his exhaustion to advantage, assuming the role of the little boy who had played too hard. Thus he was pampered, a favorite pastime of his, and got the undivided attention of every available beauty on the picture. Although Stevens was aware of his game, he said nothing to Jimmy, but harbored his sentiments for release at a later date.

As Jimmy's fame increased, George Stevens began keeping a close eye on his actions. Stevens was fully aware that the unusual, unpredictable Dean had not been allotted ample time before starting *Giant* in which to make the normally strenuous personality and emotional adjustments that are required when an obscure actor suddenly achieves stardom through such amazing audience acceptance. Stevens's newest film epic was far too important to allow for any complications from a problem child.

But as time went by, he was surprised and pleased to note the comparative ease with which Jimmy seemed to be making the adjustment. The unmanageable lad, in whose hands rested the strongest role in the picture, had turned out to be less of a problem than he had anticipated. He had come to accept Jimmy's attention-getting performances in Marfa with understanding, and had even defined his love of sports-car racing as a simple matter of bravado, both traits frequently found among the more egocentric actors. He even began finding it an interesting challenge to deal with Jimmy, never quite knowing when he would be able to approach him on a fifty-year-old plane, or when he would be forced to handle him on an eight-year-old level. Indeed, fame had definitely not gone to Jimmy's head. But, still, there was something.

Stevens's displeasure began when the company returned from Texas to the Warner Brothers lot in Burbank. He discovered that Jimmy, accustomed to keeping late hours and oversleeping, had arranged with a member of his

production staff to be wakened each morning by telephone—several times, if necessary. This, to the director, was an obvious lack of self-discipline. Supposedly, there has never been room for tardiness in any branch of the theater. He spoke to Jimmy about the inconsiderateness of making the cast and crew wait, if only for several minutes, on those mornings when he was arriving late. Jimmy promised to mend his ways.

For a time, there seemed to be no other problem. Then Jimmy began getting a series of morning calls, for which he would show up bright and early, on time. Once in costume and make-up, he would be obliged to sit around the set for hours, waiting to be used. This, as any movie actor will attest, can be a most irritating situation, especially if it becomes recurrent. Jimmy complained, but little was done to remedy the inconvenience. So he reverted to his system of having a member of the production staff call him in time for him to be on the set when his scenes were ready to go before the cameras.

Unfortunately, his system was not foolproof, and he was a bit late several more times. Again Stevens spoke to him about it. But this time Jimmy felt no need to heed the warnings, since the studio had chosen to ignore his plea for consideration.

On a Saturday morning that followed, Jimmy was scheduled to be at the studio early. He had noticed that Mercedes Mc-Cambridge, another player in the film, was also due in early. He estimated that, since her scene would be shot first, he would not have to be at the studio until much later in the day. It was the perfect day, he figured, to move himself into his newly rented house in the San Fernando Valley.

He chose the wrong day. On that same morning Miss Mc-Cambridge slipped and fell in her shower, cutting her face badly. In a desperate move to save time and money, Stevens

switched the schedule, planning to shoot Jimmy's scene first instead.

The entire morning was spent calling around town in an effort to locate the missing star. With each hour, the cost of the delay became greater and greater, and Stevens's temper hotter and hotter.

At lunch break, Elizabeth Taylor, another of the film's stars, hopped into her car and buzzed around, finally locating Jimmy. She brought him back to the studio, where, before an assemblage of the entire cast and crew, Stevens publicly berated him. Jimmy stood by while the director advised him that there was no room for his type in Hollywood and informed him that it would be a welcome relief to Hollywood if he would go back to New York.

As in the incident with Daniel Mann, Jimmy shrugged it off in time, detaching himself emotionally from the production, which was close enough to completion to warrant a little patience. The incident was considered past, but not forgotten.

The remarkably perceptive George Stevens had studied his problem star and had grown to understand him. But, unique as it might have been in his estimable career as director, he had been unable to apply his understanding and had, as a result, allowed an irreparable breach to occur between himself and a young man to whom he could have meant a great deal. For, despite his clash with Stevens and his arbitrary disapproval of the movie-maker's methods, Jimmy seriously appreciated the man's background and the unmistakably magic touch he lent to any motion picture he directed. Stevens was a man from whom he could have learned a lot, and he knew it. Perhaps, given more time, their lack of communication could have been overcome.

Neither did Elizabeth Taylor, accepted as one of the greatest beauties of our times, have an easy time establishing a friendly relationship with Jimmy. The day they were introduced, shortly before the picture started, Jimmy

was charming, even to the point of taking her for a ride in his new Porsche. His whole approach was contrary to everything she had been braced to expect from him. She went away from the first meeting convinced that people were wrong for referring to him as an antisocial odd-ball. The next time she saw him was on the set. She approached him in her friendliest manner, expecting from him the same warm reception she had met the first day. Instead, she was shocked when Jimmy glared at her over the rims of his glasses, muttered something to himself, and strode off as though he hadn't seen her. She was terribly offended.

It was not until they were on location in Marfa that she succeeded in getting through to him. At dinner in a local country club one night, Liz found herself seated at a table alone with Jimmy. After a long, deadly, unbearable pause, she turned to him and pointedly said, "You don't like me, do you?"

For a moment Jimmy stared at her blankly, then he began to chuckle. "I like that," he replied, to her astonishment.

The bristling directness of her challenge revealed what he had wanted to know: his lack of interest had bothered her. At last. La Belle Taylor had come to him. From their first meeting, he had been aware that she was accustomed to having her beauty command every man with whom she came into contact, and he had simply decided to break the pattern. It would not have flattered his ego to have reached the lovely Miss Taylor with fawning eyes and attentive gestures. But no man could deny the gratification that would come when such a woman, disturbed by a rare, if not unique, experience of rejection, would abandon her lofty perch to seek him out. That was food on which the male ego might nourish itself for a long time.

During the rest of the evening, they talked in a free and easy manner, and for the first time, Jimmy let her pass through the tightly guarded protective wall he had built up around himself.

From that time on, Liz stopped taking offense at what he did and stopped feeling hurt when he was moody around her. She had discovered that his moods, though not pleasant or attractive, were merely a sign of his immaturity and temperament, simply a part of his complex nature, and were not meant to be taken seriously by those unfortunate enough to be around at the time.

For years Jimmy had been going through a long stream of women and girls, like a casting director in search of the world's most perfect female. With the exception of Beverly Wills, Dizzy Sheridan, Pier Angeli, and the unknown Diane from Santa Monica City College, none of them had been relationships of any significant duration, and none of them had made more than a temporary impression on him.

From the early days back in the Penthouse, I had given up any effort to keep track of the long line of skirts that rustled through his life; there were just too many, and I found it fruitless to memorize names and faces that were never to be seen again. One after another, they would arrive for inspection, go through a series of rigorous tests, and be rejected, but not forgotten. At the beginning, he had kept an actual catalogue, but as the list became embarrassingly long, he abandoned it in favor of a more personalized mental file. It hadn't taken me long to realize that it was not enough for a girl to be able to keep up with Jimmy. In order to fill his requirements, she would have to make him keep up with her.

In the case of Miss Wills, although his motives may have been mostly material, he had been stimulated by her uncommon zeal for competition, especially in sports. Dizzy Sheridan had taught him to laugh and play, to let his mind dance to shepherd flutes, to prance in a carefree child's world. But she had been unable to pass the test of divinity, and so she, too, slid by. In Pier Angeli he had found all the fragility, the purity, the goddess-like perfection that means woman. But she had been untouchable, almost unreal, of a

different world, moving on a plateau that was beyond his reach, and he had lost her.

It was not until Ursula Andress stormed into his life that he found his match intellectually. The touchably real, exotic European import was successful in tantalizing, even tormenting, his intellectual appetites.

Miss Andress was the by-product of a post-war society of young people in Europe. In many ways she personified the Existentialist philosophy so prevalent in Rome, where she had lived. In their belief that "we exist and that is all there is to this absurd thing we call life," the Existentialists have whittled life down to its marrow, eliminating everything that is unnecessary, everything that is not a natural part of human behavior, everything that is affected, contrived, falsely motivated, and everything that is not simply basic. Within its closely defined manifesto, there is no room for fancy tradition, social grace, conformity, patterns, platitudinous thinking, or pedantic attitudes. It is one of the most demanding and controversial philosophies of life to have evolved from the chaos of our modern world, yet it evolved naturally.

Since, basically, Jimmy's personal philosophy of life was already so much in line with the Existentialists' philosophy, with many puritanistic qualifications resulting from his American background, he was naturally fascinated by Ursula's way of thinking and approach to life.

Unfortunately, the great dissimilarity in their environmental backgrounds soon began to cause many breaches and strong differences of opinion. Bound by her belief in natural behavior, she found it impossible to tolerate in Jimmy what she considered unnatural, or, rather, affected behavior. Jimmy, on the other hand, believing that he represented, or at least tried to maintain, a terrifically demanding degree of artistic and personal integrity and basic honesty, was easily provoked by her incessant criticisms, and would flare up defensively whenever she

would prod him with accusations of being phony. As a result, they were constantly at one another's throats and could be seen and heard arguing furiously wherever they went.

Finally, unable to endure the turmoil any longer, she rejected him and turned her attentions to a less exhausting personality. For a time, Jimmy pursued her, hoping to get her back. But, after a while and a few other women, she, too, took her place at the bottom of his impressively long list of past experiences.

As her fondness for the unusual Dean increased, Liz Taylor slowly found her mother instincts toward him growing. Feeling the power of the overwhelming loneliness, which Jimmy conveyed to almost everyone, she began to answer to the call from within her to help him.

She had noticed his strong attachment for the Roths' Siamese cat, Louis, reputedly the only cat ever to have walked over Pablo Picasso's palette and then to have had the famous artist himself wash his paws clean. Everyone had been amazed at how quickly Louis had responded to Jimmy's attentions and how devoted Jimmy had become to Louis. It was his love for Louis that inspired her to do something for Jimmy, something she felt would help fill that great gap of loneliness.

One day she called Jimmy to her dressing room on the set of *Giant* and there presented him with a scrawny bundle of kitten, Siamese by breed. Speechless with gratitude, Jimmy was unable to do more than fondle the frail little creature that snuggled in his arms.

"I'll call him Marcus," he purred.

As much as Jimmy needed to be loved, he needed to give love: a common human dilemma. Unfortunately, he was beginning to feel he would never find anyone who could fully accept the responsibility for his love. It seemed a logical conclusion, considering the possibility that his

capacity for love might have been as great as his capacity for life. He was simply aware that there were few, indeed, who would accept, who could handle a love of such frightening proportions.

But here, in Marcus the kitten, he might find an outlet for some of that love. Here there was little chance of rejection, an unpleasantly familiar past experience. And a greedy little kitten will take all the loving it can get with no fears, no compunctions, no trepidations, and no limitations.

In the weeks that followed, he became deeply attached to Marcus. He worried a great deal about his welfare and would rush home from the studio at lunch breaks to feed him and be with him. He would never go out in the evening without first providing for Marcus. He even began getting in at more reasonable hours so that his little friend would not be left alone too long. And, thus, a few cockeyed ounces of beige fur began the amazing process of taming the erratic Dean.

Gradually, Jimmy had been coming to the conclusion that acting was more an interpretive art than a creative art. The feeling that he would not be able to express himself adequately solely through acting became so strong that he finally turned to Sandy Roth for advice.

Since Jimmy had always been interested in sculpturing, Sandy suggested that he might find an outlet for his desire to create in that field. Jimmy agreed that sculpturing might very possibly hold the answer, at least part of it. So Sandy took him to meet Pegot Waring, a prominent sculptress, in hopes that Pegot would accept him as one of her students.

Although he came highly recommended, Pegot had to know that Jimmy was not just another Hollywood star, there on a whim, to study sculpturing until the diversion wore off. It was not her custom to accept students indiscriminately. But after putting Jimmy through a test, having him thrust his sensitive hands into some clay to see what he could

mold, she was enthusiastic over his potential as a sculptor. He had the proper serious attitude and he was adept enough to show great promise.

So, under the tutelage of the dynamic sculptress, Jimmy began to express himself even more through what he felt was a truly creative art.

Once again, he seemed to settle back, utilizing his spare time to learn sculpture and photography, to be with his Siamese kitten, to grow with the Roths, while he was finishing up the work on *Giant*. For the time, sports-car racing was out of the question, since the studio had, by this time, obtained his verbal promise that there was to be none of it during the filming of the picture.

With Ursula a part of his past, he began dating other girls frequently. Many of his evenings were spent at the Villa Capri, his favorite dining spot in Hollywood, where he would chat until the closing hour with Nicole, the manager. Long, enjoyable hours were passed in warm talks with the friendly Russian, who was also the landlord of his newly rented home.

Again a calm seemed to settle over him, and his life had the appearance of being more in order. He seemed to convey the impression that he was happier, more peaceful than he had been for a long time.

In less than a year and a half from the time he arrived in Hollywood, his career had surged forward phenomenally. He had come to peddle his wares selectively and wisely, and the movie people had seen the value of what he had to sell. When he had arrived in Los Angeles to do his first picture, he had needed an advance from the studio in order to exist until he went on salary. By the time he was into his third film, only a little more than a year later, his financial condition and potential were enviable even to the most blase Hollywoodite.

His contract for *East of Eden* had called for a mere ten thousand dollars, although, by the time the picture was

finished, he had earned more than the basic sum. But with the incredible reaction to his first film, his price had soared, until at last the talk-price for the proposed *Somebody Up There Likes Me* at M-G-M reached the hundred-thousand-dollar level.

Before his name had become established through motion pictures, star and co-star billing on live television shows in New York had brought him remuneration merely in the hundreds of dollars. However, during the filming of *Giant*, Jane Deacy negotiated a contract with N.B.C. which called for Jimmy to play the Morgan Evans role in their color "spectacular," *The Corn Is Green*, to start rehearsing in October, shortly after the completion of work on *Giant*. For this latest television assignment, Jimmy had commanded the unprecedented price of twenty thousand dollars.

There was little to worry about for a long time to come. Since he was ill-equipped to manage his own money, he had called in professional managers to take over for him. Thus, relieved of the responsibility of watching over his rapidly accumulating fortune, he turned his attention to the more rewarding pastime of living and working.

In an overzealous attempt to readjust my own career so that it would fall more into line with my original aims, I found myself in a muddled state. For almost three years I had been writing situation comedy for various television shows. It had never been my intention to become a comedy writer, although I had always found the work enjoyable. Originally, my sights had been aimed not at television—at least, not situation comedy—but at the theater and straight drama and comedy. Unfortunately, somewhere along the line those original intentions had been lost in the gratifying moderate success of my basically unwanted but superficially accepted career in Hollywood.

Subconsciously the whole problem had been tearing at me. But it was not until the many long talks with Jimmy on

art and the artist's obligation that I accepted my problem openly. I became determined to face it on my own, as had always been my method of operation, and plunged blindly into the reconversion.

But unexpectedly, after several fruitless months of mischanneled efforts at writing for a different medium, I found myself wretchedly despondent and utterly broke.

Although I had refused to mention my difficulty to Jimmy, he noticed there was something drastically wrong with me immediately upon his return from Marfa. It could have been the fact that I had lost a lot of weight and had a sallow, haunted look about me. Or it could have been the frightened twitch I had developed whenever I heard talk of work or money. Or it could even have been the way I seemed to have lost all contact with the world around me, unable and unwilling to communicate anything, since there was nothing within me to communicate. Whatever the case, Jimmy spotted the symptoms immediately and began to extend himself to me more than he had ever done in all our years of friendship.

Careful not to make his project obvious to me, he started by drawing me out of my vacuum of self-pity. He refused to allow me to sit home in my depressing apartment, where I had become accustomed to spending many maddening hours, just staring at my dusty typewriter. Insistently he would drag me off to an evening of diversion, during which he would offer my numbed mind sufficient stimulation to bring it back to attention. And after several weeks of fascinating hours spent with the Roths, happy times spent at the Villa Capri, and Jimmy's constant application of levity and inspiration, I was beginning to come around again.

"Okay, now, Willie," he finally said to me one day, at his home. "What's the bit? Why the great mental state?"

I explained my problem as best I could and concluded by telling him that I felt, as a result of his efforts, I could now

start afresh and perhaps accomplish what I had started out to do. "The trouble is," I lamented, "it's too late."

"What do you mean, too late?" he frowned.

"Well, I've finally got a solid idea for an hour television drama," I explained. "I know it's the right idea, because I know what it's about. I've lived with the characters so long I could write them in my sleep. The conflict in it is so universal that every man will be able to identify himself with it. The only trouble is, I've never written an hour script for live television. It would take me at least ten weeks, if not longer."

"Well, then, *write it!*" he said.

"I can't," I said. "I mean, I can't afford to. I've let myself go broke, so broke I can't even afford to take the time to try selling myself out to situation comedy again."

"I've got to take a job right away. And wouldn't you know it would be just my luck? Some publicity house just offered me a job. I'm going to have to take it and hold off on this script, or start writing nights. It's killing me, because the thing's hot now."

I want to jump right on it. Wow! I've got those retrogression blues."

I went on to explain how the whole matter had so successfully frustrated me into a state of despondency, since I had finally discovered exactly what I wanted to write and in what manner and style. As we discussed the difficulties many artists have in finding the proper place for their talents, Jimmy toyed with little Marcus, the kitten. After I finished telling him of my excitement over finding myself and my frustration over not being able to do anything about it while it was all fresh and important, I sank into a thoughtful silence.

"The gratification comes in the doing, not in the end results. Remember that, Willie."

"I don't dig," I shrugged.

"You know good and well the only happiness you've known has come during that moment of creation," he snapped.

I understood.

"All you're suffering now are those old anxiety traumas. You're too old for that jazz. If you'd just take the time to shake off all the inadequacy fears, you'd see that you've actually grown during this time—the same time you consider wasted. You've been developing, and that's the best thing that can happen to any artist. Oscar Wilde wrote a great thing, *De Profundis*, his prison memoirs. In it he says, '...the artistic life is simply self-development.' That's what's been happening to you.

"Your only trouble now is that you can't see the forest for the trees. You've let this dirty materialistic world frighten you into forgetting what's really important. You're just afraid you won't be able to survive as nicely as before. You've forgotten all the sacrificing you had to do to get where you are now. You don't even remember that you did it while you were in a similar position. Then you didn't even have any professional credits.

"Look, man, you should know by now that you'll survive to do what you have to do, regardless of how rough things start looking. You can't help but go on, in spite of all their rotten obstacles. You're a dedicated artist; that's what'll guide you. Listen to Wilde again: '. . . It is vocation, not volition that determines us...'

"You keep talking about selling this and getting that salable idea. What you should be concerned with is *writing* the thing. That's the most important matter, doing the work. That's the only place you'll find what you're looking for. The gratification comes in the doing, not in the end result."

He rigged a long cord which hung from the two-story ceiling in his rustic living room, and set Marcus to playing with the huge knot he had tied at the end. He didn't speak

again, but only chuckled, as Marcus smacked the knot with his terrible kitten paw, stalked it like a fearsome lion stalking his prey, clung to it and swung like a miniature feline Tarzan, and was thrown in a tumble to the floor, where he shook his dazed little head and prepared for another attack.

After a long interval, Jimmy turned to me and asked, "How long did you say it would take to write this script?"

"I figured about ten weeks, at the least," I answered.

He strode over to the picture window that looked out over the cool front lawn and fixed his gaze, without speaking for a while.

"Do you know Christopher Isherwood?" he asked finally. "I've never met him," I admitted. "I've read most of his stuff, though, and thought it was great. I even started going to the Vedanta temple here—you know, the Hindu temple—because I heard he speaks there from time to time. But I never caught him. Why do you ask?"

"Well," he drawled, a little uncertainly, "you've got the right idea now. I guess Chris is the best one to tell you how to use it. I want you to meet him."

"Fine with me," I agreed. "But what do you mean?"

He didn't answer, but kept staring out the window..

Then, after several long minutes, he turned. "Look:, I owe you some money from way back there in New York, don't I?" "Who knows?" I shrugged.

It had been a long time ago and we had never kept: books. There had been much money lent back and forth during those days of struggling, but it was hard to tell which one of us owed whom how much. It was probable that Jimmy had wound up owing me, only because I had been more constantly employed on a regular salary. But we had long since established a relationship in which either of us could turn to the other for financial help without giving a thought to repaying the debt. It was the way we had functioned for the past four years, and it had always worked well.

"I figure I owe you somewheres around seven hundred dollars," he stated flatly.

"Oh, wow!" I exclaimed. "Aren't you off in your figuring just a little bit? I never saw that much money in those days. Anyway, what's that—"

"That's what I figure," he interrupted. "Tell you what, Willie. I'm going to give you a check for a thousand dollars. Will that carry you through the ten weeks so's you can write that script?" "Aw, come off it, Deaner. You flipped?"

"I said, will that last you until you finish the script?"

"Well, sure, but—well, of course it will! But you don't owe me any thousand dollars, or even any seven hundred, and you know it. I could take a little loan, maybe, but not that kind of money. I have no way of guaranteeing you I could pay it back. I mean, just because I write the script doesn't mean it'll sell." "There you go again," he bellowed. "I wish you'd forget that word!"

"Deaner, I only meant I can't accept that kind of—"

"I think you should get out of that depressing dump you live in, too," he broke in, ignoring my statement. "I'm probably leaving for New York right after the picture's finished, so you can move in here for a while. But only for a while."

He had made up his mind and I knew there was nothing I could say or do to alter his decision. For the first time in our long friendship, I was embarrassed. I didn't know what to say. His was the finest, the most generous consideration anyone had ever extended me, and I was deeply touched. I turned away and looked out the back window, which for some reason was very watery.

"On second thought," he continued, "I don't know whether I'll be going back to New York to do that show or not. Well, I guess it would work out for a while anyway."

He turned and walked to the picture window again. "Deaner," I mumbled, "what're you doing? I mean, what do you expect me to say?"

He grunted and kept staring out the window.

"Nope!" he exclaimed at last. "I'm not going to make it that easy for you. AH you'd get out of living here with me is the stimulation of being around. It's too easy with all the interesting people, the hi-fi and all that jazz. If you've got to write, you can write anywhere. Am I right?"

"Sure, but—"

"So, if you can't write where you are, move somewhere else. Or write in the back seat of your car."

He crossed to a table and took out a checkbook.

"I'm going to give you a check for a hundred first," he explained as he started to write out the check. "Make it last as long as you can. When this is gone, just let me know."

As he handed me the check, the sliding panel of the picture window rolled aside and Lew Bracker stepped into the room. Jimmy shoved the check into my shirt pocket surreptitiously and turned to greet Lew.

After chatting with Lew for a minute, I felt I had to leave. There was much I had to think about, and I had to be alone. Jimmy walked out to my car with me.

As I slid behind the steering wheel, Jimmy took my hand and squeezed it firmly, refusing to let go until he had had his say.

"Okay, Willie," he smiled. "Make me a promise?"

"Anything, Deaner," I vowed.

"You know what you want now—just do it," he said seriously.

I smiled. "I don't know what to say, except, like, that's what I had in mind."

He nodded and released my hand. "Good," he said.

Then, as I released the emergency brake and started the motor, he added, "Now, promise yourself."

The car rolled forward a few feet.

"Hey, Willie!" he shouted.

I slammed on the brakes and looked back at him out of my window.

“Remember,” he said. “What is essential is invisible to the eye.”

As I drove off, I looked in the rear-view mirror to see him standing there in the road, waving goodbye.

Deliriously happy, feeling like a reborn man, I stepped on the gas and sped away from the quiet street in Van Nuys, away from the last moment I was ever to spend with my friend.

Since the work on *Giant* was completed and he was once more free to race, Jimmy entered the sports-car races to be held the following week end in Salinas, California, the same area where *East of Eden* had been filmed on location. He had just paid over \$6,000 for a new Porsche Spyder, a high-powered sports model made of lightweight aluminum, and designed to reach speeds in excess of one hundred and fifty miles per hour. The car would be ready in time to make the race, which would have to be his last for a while. The Monday following the Salinas competition he was to start rehearsals for *The Corn Is Green* at N.B.C., and after that, he was off to M-G-M to start *Somebody Up There Likes Me*.

Jane Deacy had arrived in town on business and had tried unsuccessfully to reach him. Finally he called her, and they got together. Since her work demanded so much of her time during the short stay in Hollywood, she was forced to decline his invitation to the road races. The best she could do for him was to confirm the fact that Warner Brothers had agreed to pay him \$100,000 a picture in the future.

They had come a long way together, those two. In a period of about four years, she had helped him compile a record of steady progress, until, at last, he now stood with his hand firmly gripping the topmost rung of the ladder. What pride must have filled her heart as she sat there, searching his face for a reaction to the glad news!

The next two days Jimmy spent trying to find someone who would go with him to the road races. Already deeply

absorbed in my new television play, I declined his offer. Sandy Roth, too, was involved in work which demanded his presence in town. Even Lew Bracker was unable to join him. There just didn't seem to be anyone willing to make the trip.

As he was leaving the Roths' one night, he stopped and confessed, "I gave Marcus away."

"You gave him away?" repeated Beulah with disbelief. "But why, Jimmy? You loved him so."

"I gave him to this girl I've been dating—Pat. She'll be able to take better care of him than I could."

"I still don't understand why," insisted Beulah, who cherishes her Louis dearly and assumed Jimmy felt the same about Marcus.

"Well, you know, I worried too much about him," he admitted sadly. "I mean, you know what a crazy life I lead. Well, I just figured, you just never know when I might go out some night and never come home. Then what would happen to Marcus?"

About three months before, he had sought relief from the inner turmoil by turning to a psychiatrist. The experience had been somewhat revealing to him, but, oddly enough, had backfired. I did not know what happened in his sessions, of course (except for what he told me, but I could speculate on the reasons for the results I observed.

By showing him that his conflicts were almost directly attributable to the great insecurity brought on by his mother's death and his father's absence from his life, the psychiatrist had only substantiated what he had for a long time known to be true. But by trying to follow what he took to be the doctor's advice for a solution to the problem, he got himself confused.

He knew that he must try to alleviate the resentment within him by accepting his father, by including him more and more in his daily life, by giving to him the love he had

so long withheld, a love that was beginning to become malignant. But even while he was trying to accept his father, the psychiatrist was pointing out the many reasons why he had not, and as far as Jimmy was concerned, should not, accept his father. The confusion that resulted had him fluctuating between complete rejection of his father and complete acceptance. He was muddled.

Willing to try once again, he placed a call to his father and asked him to make the trip to Salinas with him on the coming week end. His invitation was declined.

After many conversations, he was persuaded by Lew Bracker to take out a \$100,000 life insurance policy with Lloyds of London. He didn't want to be bothered with the details of filling out the application, so he left that to Lew. But when Lew insisted that Jimmy was the only one who could stipulate the beneficiaries, he took a moment to consider.

"Make it out so that \$5,000 goes to Grandma and Grandpa Dean, \$10,000 to Markie for his education, and the rest to Marcus and Mom," he said, perhaps suspecting that his psychiatrist wouldn't approve.

But Lew explained that it would be better to make his estate the beneficiary. He advised him to make out a will in which he would stipulate the division of the life insurance policy's principal sum along with the rest of his assets. Lew—without approving or disapproving Jimmy's wishes—urged him to have a will drawn immediately, since the absence of a will would automatically make his entire estate pass to his nearest living relative, in this case his father, thus rendering his personal desires for the apportionment of the money pointless. Jimmy agreed to make an appointment the following week in order to draw up the will.

On the morning of September 30th, he picked up his new Porsche in Hollywood. It was a beautiful machine, this

\$6,000 worth of pastry-crust aluminum and horsepower. Would it bring him another triumph?

Before leaving, he placed another call to Sandy Roth and finally persuaded him to abandon his work, just for the week end, and take a much needed rest. Bill Hickman, another sports car enthusiast, and Rolf Weurtheric, a German boy who was to be his pit mechanic at the races, were also going to join them on the long drive upstate.

He decided to put some mileage on the new car, instead of towing it behind the station wagon. So he drove and Rolf rode with him to keep his sharp mechanic's ears open for motor eccentricities. Sandy Roth and Bill Hickman followed in the station wagon.

All went well as they sped along the smooth wide Southern California superhighways in the direction of San Francisco. But as they approached San Bernardino, he pushed the gas pedal closer to the floor, bringing his speed up to 65 miles per hour.

He hadn't seen the highway patrolman. The ticket was made out for speeding, 65 miles in a 45-mile zone. Just before he drove off, the officer doled out the standard warning, "If you don't take it easy, you'll never make it to Salinas." Perhaps, as Jimmy rolled back onto the highway, he remembered another traffic ticket, way off somewhere in the distant past.

About five o'clock they stopped for coffee in a little roadside restaurant. As they were leaving, Sandy and Hickman pulled in, and they exchanged greetings.

"We won't be long," called Sandy, as they drove off. "Just ten minutes behind you."

An hour later, as they sped east on Highway 41 near Paso Robles, the sun was beginning to set just over the brink of the hills behind the dull silver-gray racer. The road was clear and smooth and traffic was light.

Then, as the Porsche neared the intersection of highways 66 and 41, the Ford heading toward it in the opposite lane

began crossing the dividing line. Jimmy reduced the speed of the Porsche. The driver of the Ford applied his brakes, leaving long skid marks that straddled the center line.

For an instant, it seemed that everything was under control again.

Then, attempting to make the left turn across onto highway 66 in front of the Porsche, the Ford lurched forward again.

"That guy up there has got to stop!" shouted Jimmy.

He swerved to the right to avoid the skidding Ford.

I was seated at my typewriter, when the phone next to me shattered my concentration with its shrill, insistent ring.

"Black monster," I muttered as I picked it up.

"Bill?" a voice inquired.

"Yeah?" I said, uncertain who it was.

"Have you heard?" it asked.

"Heard what?"

"You— Oh my— I wish I hadn't called," came the response, with a tremulous sigh.

"What is this?" I pressed. "Who—"

"Jimmy's dead," it whispered.

For some reason, I believed. I was totally cold, unaffected, except for the sensation that everything had suddenly stopped.

"How?" I breathed.

"Automobile accident up north. Just heard it on the news...."

I dropped the receiver into its cradle. For an indeterminate length of time I sat staring at the phone, just trying to think.

I picked up the receiver and dialed the Roths' number. The line was busy. I dialed the operator and asked her to check the line.

"I'm sorry," she confirmed. "That line is busy with a longdistance call."

Automatically I dialed the number of the Villa Capri.

"Villa Capri," came a natural voice from a different world.

"Nicole, please," I said.

In my ear were the sounds of people talking, people eating, chatter, tinkling glasses, clattering dishes, and none of it was real.

"Hullo," came a heavy voice in a thick Russian accent

"Nicole?" I asked.

"Yes."

"It's true, isn't it?" I said deliberately.

There was a moment, and then, "Yes."

"Then, it's all over," I moaned softly, and hung up.

I slid limp into my chair and stared fixedly at a miller that was repeatedly banging itself against the glaring light bulb in my desk lamp.

Out of the swirl of thoughts came some voices:

"All right, answer this, then," a female voice challenged.

"What is the one thing you respect above all else?"

"That's easy," drawled Jimmy in a time past. "Death. It's the only thing left to respect. It's the one inevitable, undeniable truth. Everything else can be questioned. But death is truth. In it lies the only nobility for man, and beyond it, the only hope."

I shook my head and shut off the voices. Feebly, I made a reach for the phone and lifted the receiver. O-L-7-, the code numbers came slowly, as I dialed the Roths' again.

"Beulah will be alone now," I thought.

-4-3, and I dropped the receiver.

I sank back into the chair.

"Judas, Deaner," I whimpered out loud, "I never got to thank you."

V

But it is a very unimaginative nature that only cares for people on their pedestals.”
Oscar Wilde—*De Profundis*

And so the drama ended. And what a perfect drama it was! In the short span of five years, an unimpressive youth had stepped from a comparatively obscure farming community, rushed unprepared into a society of giants, suffered the romantic pains of the artistic life, grown rapidly to intellectual heights, smashed his way to fame and success, daring to defy conventions and patterns all the way, and, at the first plateau of success in a career that held incredible promise, had come to an abrupt, violent, tragic end, leaving as his survivors a handful of friends who cherish his memory greedily and a globe-encompassing family of fans who mourn him passionately. Yet it remains a drama theatrically imperfect, for the central character was seldom constant.

On the one hand, Jimmy was a sentimental idealist, striving for a world of perfection through a universal means of communication, love; desperately he searched for that refuge where he could lay down his head without fear of having it trampled by the disillusioned. On the other hand, he was a rugged individualist, a realist in the basest sense of the word, ardently defending his right to exist in a manner that suited him, fervently refusing to relinquish even a portion of his right to do, be, feel, or think whatever was natural to him.

There were instants when he would face himself candidly, the first to admit his faults and shortcomings. There were more when he turned a defensive back on his indiscretions and mistakes. Paradoxically, while he often refused to heed

his own advice, he would inflict that very same advice on friends. Where he found in others his own inadequacies, he tried to cure them; where he found turmoil, he tried to calm it. Although he had no desire to attain a state of personality perfection, he seemed to want to find in others his own best self. Thus, he could hold his friends up as a mirror to himself and see in them what he could have been, but never became out of a fear that he would rid himself of that very turmoil on which he based so much of his ability to express himself.

Now, he would insist dogmatically that his own definitions of art and the artist's obligation were unquestionably right, wailing, "treason," "sacrilege," and "prostitution" to the heavens whenever other artists would stray from the narrow path. Again, he would turn, the unsure, the uncertain twenty-some-odd-year-old worldless waif, seeking out each new object of his admiration for reassurance and verification.

Constantly dogged by an undefined, obscure obligation to his departed mother, he chased his own tail through life in a futile attempt to find relief from the pressure of that unfulfillable obligation. Arriving at the topmost point of attainment in each field of endeavor, he would abandon that field and turn his efforts in another direction. And on and on he went 'round the guilt-berry bush, destined never to stop, until he was stopped.

As for myself, not only was he a beloved friend whose absence seems almost intolerable, but he was also a player through whom I was able to experience vicariously great portions of life which would have been, otherwise, totally lost to me. He was important, first, because he was a living, breathing, feeling, thinking, erring human being, and second, because he was simply a friend through whose guidance I was able to grow and through whose mistakes I was able to learn.

If you will turn to the last page of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*, the page directly opposite the simple drawing of a single star suspended above a lone sand dune, you will read this inscription:

"This is, to me, the loveliest and saddest landscape in the world. It is the same as that on the preceding page, but I have drawn it again to impress it on your memory. It is here that the little prince appeared on Earth, and disappeared.

"Look at it carefully so that you will be sure to recognize it in case you travel some day to the African desert. And, if you should come upon this spot, please do not hurry on. Wait for a time, exactly under the star. Then, if a little man appears who laughs, who has golden hair and who refuses to answer questions, you will know who he is. If this should happen, please comfort me. Send me word that he has come back."